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THE

ROD AND THE STAFF.

BY

THOMAS T. STONE.

SECOND EDITION.

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PSALM XXIII.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.  
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures,  
He leadeth me beside the still waters.  
He restoreth my soul;  
He leadeth me in the right paths,  
For his name's sake.  
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil, for thou art with me;  
Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.  
Thou preparest a table before me,  
In the presence of mine enemies.  
Thou anointest my head with oil;  
My cup runneth over.  
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,  
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.



PART I.

THE SOUL AND ITS COMFORT.



## CHAPTER I.

### PLEASURE AND PAIN.

WHENEVER one thinks or speaks of the darker side of human things, he should carefully guard against the error which has generally connected itself with this order of views. In contrast with the Persian conception of the two great principles regarded ethically and naturally as good and evil, symbolically as light and darkness, the Hebrew prophet introduces the one absolute Being claiming to himself the origin of both: —

“I form the light and create darkness;  
I make peace and create evil;  
I the Lord do all these things.”

According to this same idea of unity diffusing itself from the Jews into the Christian Church, the Manichæan doctrine was early repelled as heresy: neither a genuine Judaism nor a pure Christianity could accept any doctrine or element seen to contradict the primeval and perpetual idea of one all-creating God. At the same time, we can hardly conceal from ourselves the fact, that what, as put into words, the

Church rejected and denounced, has continually existed as an active power both within it and without. Cicero wrote a book concerning contempt of death. As if they had borrowed his very phrase, Christian devotees, precisely like myriads of devout men not aware that Christianity exists, have sought to acquire in themselves, as they have earnestly commended to others, contempt of the world; meaning by the world the whole aggregate of things bounded by space and time. Obviously this method of thinking rests on the tacit assumption, that the world is contemptible, that what in man pertains to the nature and order of the world deserves contempt; or, in other words, that there is in the world and in man, not only an intrinsic, but an essential evil. Now to fulfil the grand idea of monotheism, to carry out the principles embosomed in the Church which always repelled as a foreign element and a dogmatic heresy the notion of two independent powers, substantial and creative, we must come sooner or later to the distinct acknowledgment, that existence in all its normal developments is purely, wholly, only good; that, as God and his creations include whatever exists from eternity to eternity, so the whole must represent and correspond to his essential and infinite goodness.

Thus our first and most outward experiences,



those of pleasure and pain, force us at the outset on a question which has always divided mankind, and which is in fact among the most difficult and profound ever approached by human thought. We may simply refer to it now for the purpose of distinctly announcing our position, of identifying ourselves, so far as such confession can identify us, with the spirit which makes and pronounces all things good, and which in Hebrew prophets and the Christian Church has signified evermore the same great idea, in referring all existence to this single cause, the creative power of love. Through the darker depths than those which lie just now before us, as well as in the brighter heights which shall look down upon us in our course, we would strive to walk steadily by the same light with which we come to contemplate those lower forms of real good and seeming evil, pleasure and pain.

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## SECTION I.

### PLEASURE.

Our whole nature is a capacity for enjoyment. Every member of the body, every organ of sensation, every power of the soul, every passion and every appetite, are so many several

instruments, avenues, and seats of what may be truly called Pleasure. Life is itself joy or peace.

To such a felicitous nature the surrounding order is adjusted. We dwell amidst healthful influences, a productive earth, a quickening air, a refreshing light, and manifold other ministries of health and strength. To every sense there is an object;—light and the forms which it reveals, to the sight; sound, to the hearing; pleasantness of food and drink, to the taste; fragrant odors; complete circles and tissues of contact, everywhere and always present to the whole and every part of the body. As we rise above outward nature, higher influences still flow into us. Social attractions draw together and hold, as in concentric circles, the numberless relations of family, of neighborhood, of country, of friendship, of mankind. Nor stop we here. Let the celestial realm open to the waiting spirit. As within us a greater element of being is evolved, so likewise it is met and encompassed by correspondences and inspirations of the upper sphere. The heavenly light, dearer than the sun or day, shines now throughout nature; everything, like the Divine Form on the mountain, is transfigured; the world, penetrated by the immortal life, becomes the image of heaven. As thus we rise from the lowliest state of man, along the ascending scale, to the summit ever towering

above us; as thus we mark, at each step of our ascent, the correspondences with his life, of all, whether natural or spiritual, elements, connections, courses;—we perceive the universe as one harmonious scene, one ever-opening sphere of enjoyments, numberless in themselves, infinite in their variety.

Surely then, some one may perhaps say, there is nothing asked of us but to revel in the benignity which encircles and fills us. And then a second thought arises, it may be, the very contrary to this: The description, so full of light and good cheer, comes of fancy, not of fact, and is contradicted everywhere by the stern presence of pain, and among men by the darker presence of sin. The latter suggestion will meet us often hereafter; let us look now for a while to the first. Shall we revel, as it intimates, in those pleasures which nature has sown like so many stars in the skies which overspread the earth and the soul? The true heart can never wait long for the answer. For something nobler than revelry, do both man and nature exist. If we seek but this, we become false and disobedient to the spirit which blesses us with such affluence. For instance, let one nourishing his body say, This food is so sweet, I will live only to indulge the appetite which craves it and rejoices in it; he becomes the swinish glutton; he has turned away

from higher pursuits, to gain the lowest form of pleasure; he has deadened his intellect and his affections; nay, he has made himself almost incapable of enjoying the very thing which he substitutes for the true God and the purer service. He has chosen a slavery by which he is unmanned at the first, then robbed of the poor boon for which he sold his manhood. Just so with the drunkard, the debauchee, the slave to any sensual appetite. Or if with greater prudence he widens his range of pleasure, and, instead of sacrificing all to one, seeks to fill and round the whole circle, what then? His principle is not changed; only his application of it is enlarged. The nobler mind, the livelier soul, is still in thralldom; a brute of more perfect form is developed, the man is shrivelled and distorted in the monstrous abortion. If in such a case the mind should sometimes receive that partial culture with which low thoughts and base passions may be commingled, we have nothing essentially better; there is only a larger realm for corruption to invade and prostrate, a finer polish to cover and gild a deeper rottenness; and where thus the influences of heaven, the aspirations of religion, the humilities and the strengths of virtue, are excluded, there may be brilliant show, but the degradation is real, and the descent is as actual, only more splendid, into the region of death.

Precisely here we may begin, then, in contemplation of our human necessities and their Divine supplies. Pleasure is perhaps a greater trial than pain. The universe is so rich that we may lose the whole in hunting for the fragments. The flowers grow so thick, and even so full of beauty, down to the very lowest line of existence, that we may stop among them, and breathe in of their sweetness until we cease to ask for anything better. Let them grow for beauty and for joy; bless their presence and the Power which plants them and makes them so glorious; but suffer them never to withdraw us from the sea-side whence we look across the rolling waters toward our native home; suffer never the lotus-fruit to soothe us into forgetfulness of what seems so far away, what is yet so near, the promise and spirit of the Father, in which all is holy, all divine and immortal.

There was an ancient sect which has been usually thought to fall into just this error, the Epicurean. Yet so far had Epicurus proceeded toward the conception of nature in its entirety, that he laid it down for a fundamental principle, that without virtue there is no such thing as pleasure, and accordingly trained himself to the severest temperance, fulfilling, so far as appears, in his own character, whatever idea the age had attained of virtue. With this fundamental max-

im, however, we are by no means secure from peril: if virtue be necessary to pleasure, then we may reduce it, forsooth, to an element or instrument of pleasure; thus estimating things, even virtue itself, by their subserviency to enjoyment, instead of making virtue supreme, and holding no pleasure of value but as effect or ministry of virtue. From such views we come to perceive a twofold peril in this benignant fact of pleasure: we may make it the great end of pursuit, — then it is pure selfishness, sometimes degenerating into the grossest indulgence; or we may yield passively to it as an overmastering power, sometimes turning our claim of freedom into mockery, — then it is utter and hopeless enslavement. Thus is it possible for our ruin to come even of our bliss. It is only beauty which can be defaced, only greatness which can be belittled, only strength which can be weakened. It takes a Rome to totter and fall through excess of power. Man, greater than all imperial dominion, is imperilled by the felicity of his nature and its harmonies with the universe.

Even in pleasure, let us remember, we need support and a guide. If we want nothing else, we want always the Divine Shepherd. If the pastures are all fresh and green, so that we may feed and lie down as we will, yet the food may turn to poison, the rest may become death: the

life flows through them from unseen depths. The waters are so still as to become stagnant and unhealthy, but that the angel comes at his hour to stir them. The soul, restored continually from weariness, and rejoicing in new influences, may yet go down into some low, marshy, pestilential air, and take in death for life. The paths are right and even; but the steps may be faltering and wandering. So that in joy not less than in sorrow, in the green rich pasture as well as in the darkness of the valley covered with shadows as of death, we need a higher presence; our fear of evil vanishes only when we feel that the Lord is with us. His rod and his staff must guide and control, as well as comfort us. And as we follow this secret guidance, victory comes to us over the dark powers; the table is spread before us, and we are refreshed; we rejoice in the Divine goodness, and find rest and peace in our Father's house.

The devout mind in the midst of pleasure may perhaps feel little inclination to turn from the joy which it feels to the thoughts of itself, and of even those emotions which bear it up to their source. Not that it withholds thanksgiving and prayer, but that in the highest state which it reaches there is an elevation of the whole being like what Wordsworth ascribes to his youth growing among the mountains:—

“His mind was a thanksgiving to the Power  
That made him; it was blessedness and love.”

This may not hinder us, however, from the endeavor to gather up into thought, and to put into such words as we can, the devotion, perhaps silent, of our happier hours.

Greatest of beings, source of all joy, blessed be thou! For this world so full of riches and beauty, for this body wrought of such fine elements into so goodly form, for the power within me to rejoice in all these gifts, let me thank thee for ever. Thou leadest me forth under thy sky; my heart exults in the vision. Thy sun shineth evermore with thy light, opening all things to mine eye. Thy clouds gather over me, and encircle me with their mists; thine they are, and with them thou softenest the day and makest the earth rich. Thine the earth and the ocean and air; created of thy power, upheld by thee forever, formed by thy wisdom into order and harmony, filled and overflowing with thy love. I can never count or speak the wonders which each day reveals from thee.

Thine also is the night. I look out in silence on the silence which thou spreadest around me, below and above. My soul riseth, O Lord, to thee! Thy stars! Thy moon! Thy midnight sky! Dearer than the day cometh the rapture to bear me from everything weak and low to



the height of thy mysterious presence. Maker of suns and earths, of day and night, of all which grows and all which lives through the world and the seasons, thou, only thou, art my Father. Quicken thy child to love thee. My heart is full of joy; hallow every joy with thy love and peace.

When I leave the vision of thy day and thy night, and rest in lonely thought, thou art with me still. Thy sun and moon and stars, thine earth and skies, dwell ever fresh within me. Thou hast planted their image in my mind; thou renewest the creation to me with every sun that riseth, with every evening as it soothes me by its peace. And in them all, and in my soul which loves them, thou hast engraven a holier image, so that neither in nature nor in myself can I for a moment live, but thy benignity surrounds me and fills me. In thee, Father, I live; in thee, Power of powers, I move; in thee, Lord of existence, I have my being. My heart overflows with joy; thine the joy which makes me glad; from thee, the heart which drinks it in. Let heart and joy, and all I am and all I have, rise, returning to the supreme fountain. Even if changes come, and clouds gather over me, and pleasures wither in my hand, let no thought of repining dwell in me; fill me with that trust which shall give me revelations of new heavens

and a new earth. Thy Sabbath fold me to its rest!

Father! save me, that I do not wander or fall. While I feel thee near, all pleasure is pure to me, sweet and heavenly; so soon as I am away from thee, pleasure is corrupt and becomes bitter, and I am earthly and know nothing but earth and earthly things. Keep me so near to thee; so quicken my sight to see thy presence; fill me with such fulness of thy spirit, that I shall never lose thee from my soul, that I shall never see the world void of thy life. There is no darkness with thee; there is no light without thee. For ever, thou life and joy of all, let thy child find the path to his home, and come to live and rest and rejoice, as thou givest him now to rejoice, in thee. Amen.

---

## SECTION II.

### PAIN.

BUT the thing which perplexes us most is not pleasure, but pain. If we would consent to it, this severe experience might persuade us to renew the question and the conflict of the ages, the origin of evil. Men ask that question as often now, perhaps, as ever; they let themselves

be drawn into the strife as painfully, as laboriously, let us confess, with almost, if not quite, as uncertain issue, as the first lovers of wisdom seeking the solution of their doubts. Perhaps, indeed, it may be premature at present to lay down any doctrine concerning the origin of evil, while a question apparently earlier is unanswered:—What is evil? What its essence? What the quality pertaining to deed or to state, which marks the one or the other as intrinsically, in and of itself, evil?

Then again the relation of the evil for which we condemn ourselves as sinful, to the evil which we bear with greater or less heaviness as pain, opens new problems all unsolved. A young man once left this record of his thought:—“In my reading of the Scriptures lately I have noticed the common assignment of man’s offences as the cause of man’s sufferings. Now if, as the Scriptures represent the matter, sin is the source of suffering, were there no sin, there would be no suffering. I apply this sentiment to the state of man in paradise. He was holy, and therefore happy: if he had remained holy,—if, instead of sinning against God, he had constantly loved him,—he could never have endured any suffering.” More than thirty years passed over the same young man, and he read the record. Then he wrote this word under it:—“Logic applied to

tradition; that is all. What did I know of man in Eden? Nothing but old tradition, turning the uncertain meaning of an ancient record into sure doctrine of the religious faith. The logic must be as shadowy as the dogma is fantastic. The historical fact of manhood living through the ages is the thing to ground opinions on, the basis of argument, the storehouse of truth, the source of inductions, the material of reason; not dim figures, all undefined, vague, wrapped up in a deeper twilight." Thus oftentimes old experience, even if it do attain to something of prophetic strain, comes to it, not so much by solving old problems, by answering hard questions, as by unlearning tradition and baseless logic, by letting go wayward and fanciful reasonings, by consenting to wait at the shrine, hearing the oracle when it is uttered, quiet when it is silent. It is for us in this hour, not to propose any new theory, but to think over the old thought, to soothe our souls by the everlasting consolation.

"Man was made to mourn"; so with a secret complacency multitudes have wailed in speech or song. Their own experience, if they had bethought themselves of seeking to interpret it, would be found flatly to contradict the saying. Man is made to rejoice, as we have seen. Man is so made as to be one complete organism of delight, his entire nature, all its elements,

combinations, powers, being inlets and sources of the pleasure united to each, as well as harmonies with surrounding influences. But just in proportion to this capacity of living joy must be the sensibility to any derangement of the beautiful order. Hence pain, the sensation within us which naturally accompanies any disorder in our own organism or in its relations to other things or persons. We are accustomed to let the permanent and essential fact pass us by with scarce a thought; how happy did we but acknowledge our felicity, and cherish as something dear to us remembrance of the occasional and temporary discord, which may prove after all not to have been discord! This whole matter of pain is indeed misconceived, and will be misconceived until we renounce wholly the Manicheism, latent or open, both of the Christian Church and of the unchristian world. All things are mirrors of Divine love; none of supernal hate: man is image of that love; not an element of his being contains or expresses aught beside. One large, perhaps the largest, class of our disquietudes disappears the instant we cease, once for all, for ever, to blaspheme the Creator by reproaching his creation, to belie the Father by reviling his child. It is not so much pain, the natural experience, which afflicts us, as it is complaint, a selfish and virtual atheism, the

reasonless struggle of the will with a benignant order, the soul insanely shutting its eye to the deeper reality, stretching it wide open to the superficial accident. So much of what we suffer may be transferred from the order of natural pain to that of sin, or at least error.

There is pain notwithstanding. Nobody can doubt that. The whole body, with all the members and parts, the whole soul, with all the appetites, passions, powers, contain in their capacities of pleasure the possibilities which become the facts, so many times, of pain. And life itself may lose, as it often does, something of the peace and joy which it naturally embosoms.

So likewise the harmony which unites man and nature may seem disturbed. Earth, air, sky, may lie like a burden on the weary soul. The light may pierce and wound the eye; sound may be changed from melody to dissonance; food and drink may become loathsome or poisonous; whatever is fragrant may vanish from the air; every touch may bring pain. Over the mind itself darkness may gather; the relations of society may deepen our grief, and even the consciousness of spiritual realities may come amidst clouds, the very sun giving only the chill light which covers all with a leaden hardness and hue. There is pain, we know too well for question; there is pain after every abatement,

after every alleviation; there is pain, one mystery among the infinite mysteries by which we are surrounded, of which we are ourselves but portion.

If there are lovers of pleasure, there have been no less despisers of pain. There is never the Epicurean but the Stoic goes into the other scale, as if to make the balance equal. Cicero has left us a good story. Pompey, he says, used to tell it, that when he was coming from Syria to Rhodes, he felt the wish to hear Posidonius; but when he had heard of a grievous sickness which was upon him, oppressing his limbs severely, he still wished to visit this noble lover of wisdom. The warrior saw the philosopher, saluted him, addressed him in words which bespoke the esteem he felt, the honor he would confer, then told him of the regret he bore away because he could not hear him. Nay, but thou canst, the Stoic said. I will not suffer pain of the body to make it in vain that such a man has come to me. So, lying upon his bed, he discoursed solidly and copiously of this very proposition: There is nothing good except what is virtuous; and when fire-flashes, as it were, of pain approached and moved over him, he said many times: It avails thee nothing, pain! troublesome as thou art, never will I confess thee to be an evil. So far has man attained in one direction.

He could not hinder the endurance ; but he has mastered it through the strengths of reason and virtuous resolution.

A modern theory seems to put the subject in a different view. The ancient Jews are believed to have considered disease, that great source of pain, the consequence, perhaps the direct punishment, of sin. Thus the blindness of the man whose sight Jesus restored, is assumed to have proceeded from sin, either his own or of his parents. And in healing the man sick of the palsy, Jesus appeals implicitly to the prevalent belief in this same doctrine, connecting the acts, as if they were inseparable, of removing the disease and forgiving the sins of the sufferer. Nor are the passages few in the Old Testament which involve what thus became an established and unquestioned maxim. Perhaps the modern theorist may have given little heed to this theological doctrine ; but in reality he has only dropped the theology, and substituted natural causes for divine efficiencies, and scientific statements for religious beliefs. The theory supposes the human constitution so perfectly fitted for enjoyment, that pain proceeds only from some infraction of the natural laws. As man suffers necessarily within himself through the violations of the moral law, through selfishness, through pride and envy, through wrath and revenge, through all passions



and deeds which the conscience pronounces sinful ; so not the less necessarily does he suffer the varieties of pain coming through violations of those various laws which operate in his own person and connect him with surrounding things. Thus pain is really made the effect of disordered action, the bitter fruit, the necessary punishment, of disobedience to the law, which the religious man calls divine, which the scientific man pronounces natural.

It does not fall within the present design to examine this doctrine throughout ; we may simply look at it as worthy of thought, as certainly true to some extent, and, so far as seen to be true, creating a religious duty. That is, if we perceive any method of living, anything pertaining to sleep or labor, to food or drink, or any personal habit, doing us serious injury, producing disease or needless pain, it is not only a convenience, but a duty, to avoid such occasion of evil. We owe it to nature and to God to save ourselves, as far as we are able, from what ever hinders the full exercise of all our powers, the full enjoyment of every genuine pleasure. So much we may say in passing ; so much, we can scarce question, of direct practical bearing on the daily regulation of our conduct.

But that which we chiefly seek now is not so much the method of escaping pain, as the spirit

with which we should meet it when it has come and can no longer be avoided. We may not despise the Stoic, but stoutly with him deny that pain is essentially evil, so holding for ever of the soul and of virtue. We may not despise the theologian or the philosopher, but admit with each that pain grows of some known or unknown disobedience to immutable law, so deriving from it lessons of wiser conduct for the future. With neither of them, however, let us stop. Holier fruit than either may grow from the hard experience. We may learn unfaltering trust. We may learn to look from the depth to the height, seeing how the stars shine never more brightly than when we are hemmed in by dark walls which seem to make even the sky black.

The great end of man's existence, if we look only to himself, is virtue; if we look to his higher relations and destiny, it is communion with God. To each, let it be our effort to render all pain subsidiary. Amidst weakness and languor and harsher pain, to summon the soul into noble and generous activity; to rise into peace and bless God for his love; to maintain sweetness of temper and welcome all who visit us with kindlier affections; to go through the whole with calmness and with care for those about us, — will be found not only virtue, but the parent of virtue. So much strength and beauty of soul have been

won: they have formed their home in the heart; they shall produce new and growing fruit, asking only culture to become richer and fairer for ever. Then contemplate the same spirit amidst these same infirmities, as thus finding its rest in the bosom of the Father, — we may close our lips; we may still our thoughts; we may soothe the beating heart; there is no less than the peace of God.

Pain has also prayer of its own. The utterance may be suppressed; or it may be made up of extorted aspirations and broken sentences, and, in extreme states, even of agonized words. But there are intervals of alleviation, longer or shorter, when the mind is able to collect for a while its thoughts, and, beyond the piercing cry for rest and mercy, can go forth soaring from its own depth and darkness through serener air toward the gates of heaven. Then, we may think, such meditations and prayers as these gush out from the full heart: —

Father, I raise unto thee my cry; in thy mercy hear me. Only thou knowest the necessity; I feel but the bitterness of the draught. My very soul is oppressed by my sufferings. I am faint in body and feeble in mind; I am pained without and within. Only thou canst support me; only thou canst lift me up. Suffer me not to complain or become impatient. O let it be that I

may have such relief, and so constant, that I shall never lose the power of unbroken thought; that I shall never fail of controlling my temper, my tongue, and my conduct to those about me. Let not others suffer from any restlessness or unkindness of mine. Strengthen me to possess my soul, to preserve faith in thee, to be gentle and loving to all.

I have learned in this painful experience something of my capacity to endure. When pain is violent, so that it seems intolerable, yet I cannot sink wholly. Thine arm, Almighty, holds me up. When pain gives place to exhaustion, and I feel myself penetrated by weakness, so that it becomes a faintness through my whole body, still I live. Thy life, Eternal, flows through me. Empower me, Lord, to look now to thee for solace and peace. For every relief I thank thee; for these supports in the past, for these consolations of sweet and tranquil rest, for the love and trust which thou breathest into my soul. If I am again to bear the severities of pain, again to faint in weakness, I beseech thee still to comfort me. Carry my thoughts back to thy Son in his deeper sorrows; and impart to me something of the trust which was with him in his lonely grief, which gave his soul rest in thee when he bowed heavily to the earth, which renewed his calmness when his enemies

laid their hands upon him, which remained with him when he bare his cross and stood before the judgment-seat, and which broke from his lips as his spirit arose to thee. Make me like this dearly beloved Son of God, a lowly child of thine; and now and always, with him, enable thy feeble one to say, The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? Blessed be thou, Father, for ever. Amen.

## CHAPTER II.

### GAIN AND LOSS.

PLEASURE and Pain are the mixed or alternating conditions of our entire being. They reach through all the cycles and elements of our nature, though we commonly give the names to more outward and bodily experiences. Precisely so far as capacities for these states reach, do those correspondences of the outward world reach also, by which they may be excited. Of such correspondences there are some, indeed the more numerous and the more important, which exist independently of our power, and slightly within our control. The sun shines for ever in the skies; his day rests upon the whole earth. The moon waxes and wanes, diversifying the night above all human strength. The stars look down with the same silent beauty, while generations come and go. The earth opens her bosom alike for all her children, age after age. Over the great forms and processes of nature, and the common relations which they establish with all men, there is no avarice so grasping as to think

of extending any claim of exclusive possession. Making the creation so much larger as modern discoveries have proved it, than ancient thought conceived, we still apply to the whole compass of it the word of the Psalmist:—

“The earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof;  
The world, and they that dwell therein.”

But though Nature is universal boon, not individual property, yet in order to secure his share of her gifts, to avoid pain, to procure and preserve pleasure, man naturally seeks to bring certain portions of her wealth under his own control. What he thus holds under admitted control,—what he may thus use, and others consent that he may thus use, as instrument and ministry to his enjoyment,—we denominate property. He who possesses a large amount of such appropriated commodity, is called rich; he who possesses a small amount, whether less than he really needs, or none at all, is deemed poor; while the most of men are found somewhere between the extremes.

Many questions, coming down from past ages, gathering importance in our own, have been agitated within a few years in regard to the tenures, the rights, and the laws of property. Those questions must be met and answered calmly and wisely. But they do not concern our present topic. The arrangements of prop-

erty being what they are, or changing either for the better or for the worse, we look not at these now, but at the persons as they come out, in the midst of them, into the activities of life, striving indeed to improve all things as they can, but, whether they can or cannot, maintaining their own integrity, nay, growing in virtue at all events.

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## SECTION I.

### GAIN.

THERE is a little child creeping upon the floor. He has seen an apple or a peach, and is in full speed to get it. He thinks nothing of the abstract matter of possession; he wants the fruit in his mouth, or, if he chances not to have this appetite just now, he wants it to play with.

Really that simple incident is an epitome of history. The first Rothschild had some hunger or other want, and commerce gave him his chance to gain the fruit or the toy. Rome had a somewhat larger and growing appetite, seeking one pleasure and another, and kept up her creeping until she grasped, not all she would, but all she could. Men and nations renew the



pursuit of the child, until the men die, the nations dissolve.

It is hardly worth our while to go into the question, whether property considered as property, so much held and hoarded, does ever become the object of direct desire and pursuit: be it so or not, the first element of the desire, the origin even of gross avarice, is some natural appetite; we seek the organic delight there is in gratification, we wish to secure the means of renewing it. We may strive to hinder others from interfering with us; we may procure from others, on certain conditions, aid in protecting our claim; we may shield what we have already gained by new acquisitions, and, as our needs or our desires multiply, we may still push our accumulations forward. It is the instinct of Nature. She wishes to have all her powers exercised, all her resources exhausted; she multiplies and strengthens those powers by the exertion; she fills and deepens her fountains the more they run out.

Churchmen have been wont to declaim earnestly, sometimes severely, against the methods of business, in a way, not unfrequently, which men have thought void of discrimination, and in fact showing, it might be said, little but their own ignorance. Perhaps some occasion may have been furnished for the contempt, however the

churchman might be ready with the retort, "Ye judge after the flesh; and if we are ignorant of the world, yours is a sadder ignorance, forgetful as ye are of God and of the soul." It is high time, however, for these charges and retorts to cease, as cease indeed they must, so soon as the clear recognition of the Divine Unity takes the place of a prevalent either atheism or worship of many gods; so soon, in other words, as man and nature and all existence are thoroughly seen in their spiritual origin, their essential goodness, and the Divine presence which penetrates and hallows them. Then piety will harmonize with nature; the prayer will cease to be profaned by the deed; and business will be instinct with devotion.

Still, between the censure of the Church and the apology, not to say sneer, of the world, we must admit both the pursuit and the acquisition of gain to be full of moral and religious peril. Admit, shall we say? Rather we should proclaim it aloud, and with irrepressible earnestness. When we see the terrible instances of commercial fraud, sometimes terminating in destructive bankruptcies, sometimes hidden and made splendid by the accumulations of wealth; when in common and every-day life we see, scarcely concealed, possibly justified by the pretext of necessity, dishonest artifices and the low tricks

of trade; when we find that hardly so small a thing as a shoe can be made without a falsehood stitched into it; when, indeed, we hear the generous young man, who would fain live truly and nobly, exclaim, in the bitterness of a heart taught by sore experience, It is impossible in the existing state of society to get a living honestly;—we may allow something to exaggeration, but we cannot help feeling that the business which fills up most of our days and years, the pursuit of gain, even if not corrupt in the core, is yet compassed round with temptations and perils. Here, if anywhere,—in our daily vocation of labor or of traffic, if in any state whatever,—we need a guidance and a strength, which neither the maxims of prudence nor the wit of the economist can impart.

The method of gain, that is the first thing for us to contemplate. As now managed, it goes altogether on the assumption that it is necessary to live. We may not say, what some have been represented as saying, Get property; if you can, honestly; but at all events, get it. We say virtually, however, Live we must; honestly, if possible; but we must at any rate live. Here is an error to be corrected. It is not necessary that we live. It may be quite necessary that we die. Nature forms us for the great transition. Nature forms us so that, without certain

means of support, we must inevitably yield to the stern destiny. Those means of support are the primary objects of work and of traffic. We ought distinctly to understand, that so soon as faithful work and honest traffic are insufficient to supply these means, and there is no human kindness to fill up the want, our hour has come. We have nothing left, but to hold fast our integrity and lay us calmly down and sleep. That is all.

Not that such an alternative is to be seriously looked for. The contrary we know full well. It hinders not that all business should be conducted on this principle. The man is himself the main thing; the gain is but secondary. And as in all things, so in labor and in traffic, we are to consider man advancing to the perfection of his nature as first, his employments and gains as instrumental and subservient. In higher and more sacred language, we are to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; that we shall so receive food and clothing and all necessary things, we may commit calmly to the Power which feeds the birds of the air, and shelters, nourishes, and makes beautiful the trees and grass and flowers. Let the young man, disappointed in his dearest hopes, look out from some hill-top as the summer sun is going down: rivers and bays spread their still

bosoms to the softening ray; forest and field reach out to the horizon, the deep green lighted by the golden splendor; the sun resting so full of majestic beauty amidst the white clouds which seem themselves to rejoice in the universal peace; perhaps he may take in new solace. Surely He who makes his earth overflow with all this wealth of joy, will also take care of me and mine! Only be virtuous, be true; work honestly; the issue comes of the Soul living through the universe.

But the gain coming in, how shall we use it? The noble and devout spirit in which it has been procured will give the answer. He who loves with all his heart the Great Father, and all whom he has made, will not leave his treasures to rust in rich poverty, nor squander them in proud luxury, nor yet scatter them in thoughtless charities. The methods of his conduct will be various as the circumstances; he will need no hard rules, no fixed prescripts, no resolutions, made out and established beforehand, admitting no deviation, demanding stern and inflexible uniformity. Nowhere is it more certain than he will find it, True knowledge proceeds rather from the heart than from the head; nor yet only as regards the general laws and order of things, but equally as regards the perpetually changing courses and relations of

life and action. If, in other phrase, our passions always instruct, teaching or deceiving, our reason, a simple and hearty love to God and to each other may be trusted to instruct, without danger of misleading, the daily thought and direction of our affairs.

If it is not so common for the prosperous as for the unfortunate to pray, yet there is surely quite as much need. The forms may likewise be wholly spontaneous in which either shall address the Supreme; not unlike in spirit to this is perhaps the aspiration of the devout man in prosperity: —

O Thou whose is the earth, whose the fulness thereof! I thank thee for the portion which thy goodness hath given unto me. Thou hast fulfilled the desires which thou didst plant in my nature. Thou hast opened thine hand, strewing around me thy gifts, enriching me with thy benedictions.

I am all unworthy of the favors which I have received. Before thee, to whom the whole heart is uncovered, from whom neither deed nor word, neither thought nor secret desire, is hidden, and by whom, as nothing is unseen, so nothing can ever be forgotten, I confess — O grant it may be with true sorrow, and earnest purpose of seeking a higher life — my feebleness to good, my proneness to sin, and the many instances which I de-

plore, wherein I feel myself to have done evil. O Lord, I remember with sadness the sins and errors of the past; I feel as a heavy burden the consciousness of my present imperfection; and I know that as thou, leading me to clearer vision and deeper purity, dost open more and more to my view the recesses and depths of concealed sin, so dost thou see them in their whole darkness and secrecy for ever. Father, leave me never to fear even amidst this solemn conviction. Show to me continually the love which surpasses and overcomes all sin.

If, in the acquisition of those gifts which thou hast granted, thou hast seen aught of sin in my heart or my deed, I beseech thee to reveal it unto me, that I may truly repent and avoid the like in my future action. If I have ever been avaricious, I pray thee to stay the low thirst. If I have been unkind, supplant the bitter spirit by love and gentleness. If I possess aught which rightfully belongs to another, enable me to discover the false gain, and cheerfully restore it to my brother. If in any way, through my whole intercourse with men and my labors on the earth, I have done wrong to any soul whom thou hast made, or withheld from any what is their due, Lord, discover to me the error, and dispose me humbly and with true love to repair, so far as I can, whatever of injury hath been suffered.

And all which I have, grant, O merciful Parent, that I may hold and use according to thine eternal laws.

Amidst the temptations of the happy state to which thy providence hath led me, grant that I may be watchful continually to keep myself from yielding to their allurements. Though riches have increased, do thou save me from setting my heart upon them. Though the pleasures and the splendors of life gather about me, raise thou my soul through them all unto thee. Suffer not gain or wealth to bring avarice into my soul. Suffer me never to attempt, through fraud or concealment, any increase of my possessions. Suffer me never to employ the power which thy gifts have put into my hands, for the oppression of any soul of man. If I have striven to labor honestly hitherto, let no new suggestion of evil draw me for an instant, or in any deed, from perfect uprightness in all my future dealings.

Withal, open my eyes to see, my heart to confess, that all which I have is still and for ever thine. The heavens and the earth, and all which they contain, are thine, only thine, thine for ever. Enable me to consecrate mine and myself to thee; that throughout the whole course of my life, and in all the uses to which I devote thy gifts, and all my relations to men, I may be careful to consult and obey, not my will,



but thine ; not my pleasure, out thy wisdom ; not my desires, but thy law ; not my passions, but thine infinite love. Enable me to perceive the supreme justice in all things ; that I may refuse all unjust gains, that I may render all just offices ; that I may withhold good from none, that I may do evil to none. Inspire me with no other wisdom than simple justice ; give me no other strength than perfect honesty. Prepare me to suffer wrong ; save me from doing it ; save me from repaying or resisting evil with evil.

In this clear vision of thy presence, open my heart to the love and charity which thou art. Through the gifts of thy benignity, raise me from the pride and the seeking of power to the lowliness and the seeking of service. As of thine unbounded and everlasting wealth thou art for ever giving out the ministries of good, so grant that of the portions which thou puttest into my hand I may be continually ministering to the service of thy children, freeing them from the evils of their several conditions, and working with thee for the regeneration and well-being of mankind. Teach me that all I hoard is lost, that all I spend in true love is safe. Not for myself, but for thee, Father, and for thy children, let me freely spend myself and all which is called mine. So let it return without ceasing to thee, who alone art Love ! Amen.

## SECTION II.

## LOSS.

HOPE, to be sure, fails us sometimes. Effort, which we supposed full of promise, turns out to be fruitless. There have been springs abundant in blossoms, followed by falls in which we shook empty branches. For such seasons, also, we must make ourselves ready.

The fruit which the little child saw, and crept with his whole might to get, is sour after all, or bitter, or rotten, and he would rather fling it away than eat. Or else some other person has snatched it up just as he was reaching for it; and what he went so merrily to seize, he cries bitterly to see lost from his hand. And this gives us the other side of history. Thousands have gone into commerce, or other business, as full of hope, as vigorous in effort, as the richest banker, and failed, perhaps too soon to make any report of bankruptcy. Or they have gained for a while, and involved many or few in their fall, which came inevitably, like some stroke of destiny, at the last; giving us on a smaller scale what on a larger the histories of nations are continually recording. Thus we see, that as certain as the course of gain, so certain also is the coming of loss. The more secret laws of

both may be hereafter ascertained with greater accuracy; at least, society may be so far improved, that men shall be able to avail themselves better of what they have learned.

As things are now, loss is to us a discipline and a moral process, no less than are gain and possession. According to the views already presented, it is not only the withdrawal of so much held by us as property, but it is the withdrawal also of those means by which we procure organic delight, nay, perhaps improvement to higher faculties of our nature. And mingled with all is the feeling, always so dark and sad, of disappointment. Amidst the thousand enterprises of our times, a man of moderate means, which he would increase, not fraudulently, not selfishly, but honestly, and for generous ends, accepts some promise which comes to him from more fertile lands, or from beyond the oceans; the soil of Kansas, or the gold of California, or the rich products of the East, or other source of larger gain, may draw him from his home and his friends and the dearest things of life, only, he thinks, for a little while, that he may come back to comfort and bless his family and society. But he soon finds himself deceived. His health fails him perhaps. Or he is unable to obtain profitable employment. Or he labors and gains, but loses his wealth in fire or

shipwreck, and returns, impoverished it may be, certainly deprived of much by his necessary expenses of outfit and absence, and his gains either unreached or lost. The extent of the outward loss may perhaps be determined by careful computation; but where is the arithmetic to give us the amount of inward loss,—the vanished hopes, the deceiving promises, the strength of soul enfeebled, the heart dispirited, nature itself clouded, cheer turned to gloom, and thought embittered at the fountain? An Italian poet has described the sprinkling of sweet liquors over the edges of the cup which contains medicine for a sick child; the wish is to deceive him into health. A cup so sweet at the top, such a man has taken to his lips; but he has been deceived into drinking poison, not medicine, and he goes henceforth in weakness and weariness, sad in heart as poor in wealth.

The case may seem extreme. Be it so or not, it illustrates the natural operation of loss. What shall we say for solace and strength in such hours? It is too late to remind the sufferer of the good old maxim, which forbids us to set our hearts on riches. Well for him, if he heeded the precept earlier. Well for him, if at the outset he brought himself really to see and to feel the insufficiency of wealth, and the uncertainty which belongs to every earthly hope.

Better still, if, through trust in the Eternal, and an interior consciousness of his presence and love, he was prepared to meet reverses calmly, assured that of the highest promise he can lose absolutely nothing. Then he may cheer himself for new effort, and, if a somewhat sadder, yet a truly wiser man, he may go forth on the morrow to his labor until the evening.

Let no loss in any event shake our confidence in the everlasting laws of nature and of spirit. It is sometimes more than intimated, that only green minds have confidence in the efficacy of virtue and truth; that, as they change their hue through varied experience, approaching to the yellow ear and the ripe fruit, they drop all those finer flowers of the spring, and retain only the maturer growths of the late summer and the rich autumn. Really, when it occurs, this loss of the vernal trust is greater than any other. Let all things go to ruin, rather than one jot of faith in the living soul fall out and perish. Be sure God lives. Two things are to be said here; the first, that, amidst the heaviest losses, the true soul will be secure of everything absolutely needed, until the hour comes for translation into the sphere of a greater destiny; the second, that, even in the last possible abandonment, virtue constitutes of itself the true, let us add, the only, success of man. God hath sent us out

into this scene of toil and struggle, not that we might be rich, not that we might escape loss of outward advantages, accumulating them pile on pile, and exulting in the greatness of our possessions: for other and greater end he hath summoned us to the lists; that, as in gain and in wealth we may find and use but the implements and the tools of virtue, so, when these fail through loss and through poverty, we may still stand erect in unarmed virtue, fixed in that steadfast trust which holds of God, when amidst the ruin and the darkness it can see nothing else.

Our age makes too much altogether of these circumstances. It honors wealth; it abhors poverty. The more should we strive, not to gain the one, not to avoid the other, but to live in the sphere from which both disappear. Some in envy spurn, at least affect to spurn, wealth, as almost all in pride despise poverty; whence springs one among the most violent hostilities which curse mankind. Classes, as rich or poor, hate each other; charity becomes proud condescension; respect turns into envious servility; the givers of alms are charged with contempt to those whom they help, the receivers are reproached with ingratitude to their benefactors; they cannot meet as men and women, they know each other but as aliens, these conferring favors which must stand for favors, those ac-

cepting them from a feeling of necessity, but with a heart which would fling them back in disdain, if it could act out its free will, and both, even in what seem relations of kindness, cherishing the mutual animosity, which sometimes finds voice, which grows in silence, which is proceeding—none can say whither. What we would say now goes only to this point. Let gain and loss, with their results of wealth and poverty, pass from the undue regard in which they are now held. Let us esteem them at their true value; then, in the one of those states we shall be free from contempt, in the other, from envy; we shall derive from either only the natural joy or sorrow by which each is attended; our sympathies shall flow forth unobstructed toward all; and, the false views, the fictitious splendors and the fantastic glooms, passed away like gay mists or dark clouds, things will appear to us as they are, our gains not less, our losses not greater; the humanity meantime shining out through all vicissitudes, like the sun, beautiful in the transparent sky,—quite as full of beauty, though the type of it be different, when it looks through misty air, or changes continually, wading now through clouds, the next instant breaking out into brightness. Let the draperies of things come and go, when and how they will; let us learn to wear and to drop

them without elation and without depression, growing devout and gentle and full of love by whatever we gain, and amidst loss of little or of all looking forth out of the deep to the sky, sure that in virtue we have true success, and trusting to the last in the Love which can never fail. Like the Master, we may have nowhere to lay our heads; none the less will we dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

If success should draw the soul to God, surely loss and disappointment should not drive us from him; rather, in such forms as shall best express devout trust, and renew and deepen all higher sentiments and purposes, let such reverses urge us to thoughts and prayers like these:—

O Thou, who givest that thou seest good, who takest away when thy wisdom ordereth, make me thankful for what I have, make me patient and trustful in every loss. Thou knowest the failure of my efforts, the disappointment of my hopes, and the wants still unsupplied which I suffer now. Pardon mine unbelief, O Lord, if at any time I have thought thy hand shut up, thy gifts held back, thy blessing refused.

I am unworthy even of the things which I still enjoy. Before thee, to whom my grief is known, and in whose providence all the causes of it are contained, I confess that my



sin is greater than my sorrow, and that, if thou shouldst mark all my disobedience, I could not stand before thee. Yet, O Lord, leave me not to think that these losses of mine are punishments from thee; that because I suffer, thou art wrathful; or that through sin which I commit, thou art excited to revenge. Enable me to hold fast the faith that, if I am weak and sinful and ignorant, thou art mighty to save, and holy and wise to make us partakers of thy holiness and wisdom. Make me humble in myself, trustful in thee.

When I recall the past, and search my ways, enable me truly to repent of every wrong deed, and every false or unkind thought. If I have made haste to be rich, teach me by this experience how deceitful the pursuit, how low the end which I have sought, how selfish and unworthy the impulse which has driven me on. If thou hast seen avarice in my heart, let this disappointment show it to me, and lead me to deny it in future, and live for greater things than gain. If I have been unkind, or bear now any secret grudge or envy within me; if ever I have overreached my neighbor in any dealing, or now hide in my heart any desire to take or to hold that which is his; if in this want I feel revenge against any whom I think unjust or cruel toward me; — discover to me, for thou knowest,

every such evil, and give me power to put it from me for ever. Free me wholly from selfishness, from pride and envy, from doing wrong or meaning wrong; and inspire me with universal charity, that I may cheerfully serve my brethren, rejoicing in their good and their felicities, and ready to receive from them the favors which bespeak my poverty, as once to bestow them in their need.

Amidst the temptations of these darker hours, enable me to watch and be strong. Though riches have failed, let me neither repine that they are gone, nor set my heart upon eager pursuit of them again. Though the sources of pleasure are drained to me, though the brightness which drew me forward has faded, and left me to darkness, enable me still to see thee, Father, and to trust thee as thy child. Let not want excite the selfish thirst of gain. Let me fall lower still, rather than speak any word of fraud, or do any deed of selfish craft. Thou whose love overflows unto all, quicken me by thine influences, that, now when I can give nothing else, I may consecrate myself to the service of thy children, unperverted by the many seductions which would lead me, Father, from thee and those whom thou lovest. From despair, from despondency, from all powers of evil, preserve thou me, and open to me thy kingdom of love and hope and peace.

Now that in thy wisdom outward advantages are taken from me, open mine eyes to see more clearly, my heart to feel and confess, the higher worth of my own being and nature. Show me the heavens above this earth; show me the beauty even of this body made from the earth; show me the higher beauty, the immense worth, of the soul which it enshrines; and lead me within to dwell in the living temple, in the new heavens and the new earth, rich with the wealth of everlasting righteousness. In the intercourse to which thou shalt call me with men, and in the loneliness of desertion and of want which no eye seeth, only thou seest for ever, enable me to live alike in thee and to thee, worshipping the Spirit, loving and blessing the world.

Help me, Father, so to live; give to thy child such consolation, such lowliness, such purity and peace; when I have never silver and gold to bestow for relief of others or myself, then fill me with a mightier power of benediction; imbue my whole soul with the spirit of love, that in the name of the Holiest I may call healing and peace to the hearts of thy children. Amen.

## CHAPTER III.

### KINDNESS AND UNKINDNESS.

LIFE, it might almost be said, is of itself the outburst of joy. We have considered two general conditions which it demands for fulfilment of this idea: the one, a healthy organism; the other, harmony with external nature; the former appearing as pleasure, the latter as appropriation of whatever nature provides for our needs. From a derangement of the organic constitution proceeds pain; from inability to serve ourselves of the ministries of nature come loss, poverty, the manifold evils which both bring to the body and the soul. Intimate as is the connection thus indicated of the person with nature, yet not the less intimate, but even more intimate, is the connection of the person with man. If through the body from mysterious depths an unceasing intercourse is going on between the power which we feel as life and the presence which we perceive as nature, this is by no means the only or the deepest intercourse. Even this is so profound and so large

as to modify continually the character of our experiences; how largely, how profoundly, we might infer from the familiar transfer of those words which describe outward things to the interior realm, so that heaven and earth, sun and sky, day and night, light and darkness, dawn, eclipse, noon, twilight, the seasons and their changes,—we might say, perhaps, all natural forms and courses,—give us the clearest and simplest language to speak the states and changes of the spirit. So man has kindred with nature. The scarcely recognized kindred becomes conscious, and is acknowledged in man. The kind reveals itself in each human being. No person meets us, but we are introduced, as it were, to a greater world, to a higher nature. We are coming to know what is meant when we say mankind. In this grand unity kindness has its birth, its growth, its activity and perfection. Where it decays, withers, sinks into inaction, and lets lower impulses overtop and suppress it, there is unkindness.

The principle is very broad. We may recur to it under other aspects, in other relations. At this time, we approach it simply as suggestion of personal need and of the fountains by which the need is supplied. We speak of man as he derives joy from the kindness which blesses him, as he suffers from aught of unkindness.

## SECTION I.

## KINDNESS.

WHEN a person is hungry or thirsty, he may find the want supplied, the appetite turned to pleasure, by food or drink which another gives him. When he has lost property, and is poor, he may recover himself, and rise from depression to some higher state, through the good offices of a friend. But in these cases the gift is, we might almost say, the least thing. Not the gift, but the giver, is the highest boon. Suppose him to have doled out his bread or water or money coldly, as if he were heartless; or only with pity, as if the needy soul were but a brute; or with disdain, as if the proud charity fell from some higher sphere into a lower, which it would be degradation to touch,—the bodily want is satisfied, but the consciousness of a want not to be supplied so cheaply is at once awakened. We want the heart to come, alive and warm, in the hand; we ask, if it be unconsciously, respect, nay, reverence, ennobling compassion; we need, we implore, not the dropping of the contribution, but the gentle access of the soul. The want of food is not more natural than the want of kindness; the vital, spontaneous, practical acknowledgment of kindred,

the deed which from the heart to the hand pronounces us of one kind.

In this sympathy of kindness originates the instinctive desire of favor, of approbation, of all friendly thought and feeling. There is nothing unmanly in the desire; nothing, indeed, is more manlike. Yet we never hear men saying, certainly not in boastful tone, that they care nothing about food and drink; they betray no shame of their pleasure at a good dinner; they would not, indeed, be gluttons or drunkards, but their care is constant and open to supply the table. Nor more readily would they confess themselves avaricious, less than money, smaller than coined metal or a few acres of land; but they do not, they should not, deny their desire of a convenient estate. But quite often we hear men exclaim, — and the tone of their voice is rather boastful, and the whole air is like a complacent smile, as they protest: “We care nothing what others think of us. Others may be pleased or displeased, and welcome; they may like or dislike, love us or be angry with us; who cares for their regard?” Every man cares for their regard! Every man ought to care for and seek their sympathy. It is a monster, not a man, who is really willing that there should be one unkind feeling, one unfriendly thought, toward him, from any one soul on the whole circle of the

great earth. A true soul would rather be starved of nature than hated of man. Nay, the kindred is so secret and deep, that never is there one capable, by any possible effort, of shuffling off, or rather rooting out, this divine instinct. Tell the vain boaster, when he parades his contempt of human opinion, that you heard the other day his nobleness applauded, or saw the sad widow or the poor orphan weep tears of love and joy for his charity, or even read high praises of his speech or sermon or book ; it is not necessary to say how your words are received ; we know very well ; man is so dear to man, that the least utterance of sincere kindness goes over his soul like the soft breeze over the Æolian harp ; and when his tongue and his gestures and all his studied actions can speak falsely, the soul gives out a language and a music of its own which will be true.

There is a different feeling from this. Some sincere and devout men, aware of their irrepressible want of sympathy, and of the tokens by which it is expressed, yet feeling also their duty to love God supremely, and to impart, rather than receive, good, are disturbed by consciousness of their instinctive desire, accounting it selfish, ambitious, a sinful vanity, and, the instant it is felt stirring within them, reproaching themselves as for something really wrong. The



effect of this is wholly bad. No force can so drive Nature from the heart, that she will not soon come back and reclaim her own. Nor yet can a good man be persuaded that any passion or instinct should establish a power above or against the Divine Law in the conscience. Hence comes conflict. The instinct of kindred rebels against the supremacy of conscience; the soul rouses reason and religion, and all the strengths it can summon, to put the supposed enemy down, but gains little else than an increased agitation of the warring elements. Victory brings but a broken truce; defeat passes into depression and remorse and weakness; in each case the strife is soon renewed, ending of course in favor of nature at the last, and leaving at once a weakened power and a distorted character. Now let the man learn and frankly confess that he needs sympathy from man as really as he needs air from nature; that as surely as the eye wants light, the ear sound, or any sense its own object; so much and so surely he needs to the depth of his soul the influence of kindness from men, women, children, whom he daily meets; he may still find occasional difficulties in adjusting the various elements of his being to each other and to the celestial order, but he is relieved of his hopeless warfare. He may seek the esteem of men, he may rejoice in their kind-

ness, he may desire or welcome even all honest praise, without suspicion of guilt, without remorse as for sin, without shame as for discovered weakness. Only let conscience reveal the higher law, and reason unfold the supremacy of God, and, as so many ready, cheerful, obedient servants, all our desires and thoughts wait around his throne, or go forth as angels to bear his message and reveal his infinite beauty.

So whatever check we may feel within us upon this instinctive need and the delight with which we perceive it satisfied, it recalls us to the same thought: God hath made us so; and his work is everywhere good and full of beauty. Ours it is to obey his voice, to seek his presence in all things, to body forth the idea which he has revealed, to become perfect according to the pattern which he has set before us in nature.

In thus showing the nearness of the relations, the dearness of the sympathies, which unite us as we gather into one fold, or as we go forth into the green pastures and drink of the sweet waters, we may seem to have overlooked everything but the beauty, to have foreseen nothing but safety. By no means. Let God and his creations be thoroughly cleared of all, to the thinnest shade, of evil, and seem as only and wholly good, we cannot then deny that men may turn beauty to deformity, and graft peril

into safety. The waters, the pastures, the folds, and the flocks themselves which dwell among them, may bespeak the perfection of the Shepherd; but they do not shut out the entrances of danger, of weakness, of disease, of death. The fairest form standing in the sun casts a shadow.

Our first danger from the generous desire of sympathy may be that of dependence. When we let ourselves look too much on the power of others, and ask their help, instead of looking into our own souls and summoning our secret energies, we find our strength wane, and, distrusting any private resource, come sooner than we think to lean upon others. Some thus lean upon their friends, even for pecuniary support; many derive, either from their friends or from what seems to them the voice of the world or the church, their opinions concerning morality, personal, social, or political, and religion as regards its principles, its worship, and the authority with which it is revealed. Look, in fact, through society; everywhere we see the prevalence of this weakness: it appears in constitutions of government and methods of legislation, in the establishments, the doctrines and disciplines and rites of churches, in plans of education, in colleges and other schools, in the various professions and employments, in the con-

duct of families, in social manners, in the formation of personal character. Nothing perhaps indicates more signally the prevalence of such dependence, than the way which has been adopted for preserving associations of men from defections and apostasies. Where is the church, or, to speak more properly, where is the sect, which trusts, which dares to trust, only in the genuine influences of the Truth, and of the natural attractions which draw souls to each other? There must be censures, excommunications, anathemas, or at least the concentration of sectarian prejudices against heretic, perhaps even against doubter. Where is the party, political or other, so confident of the principle which it avows and represents, that it is willing to stand and fall with it? Let any member have the audacity to think freely, to speak his thought, to do his deed: we have no wide research to pursue, no long time to review, before we learn how men are enthralled. Where is the society whose laws, unwritten indeed on parchment or paper, but really written with something dearer than blood into something more vital and lasting than the pen can reach, do not execute themselves otherwise than by reason and love and sweetness of manners? They may not foretell, but every man foresees, the ostracism; it threatens each individual every instant, to be named

only for jest, to be felt as a sword whose point touches the heart.

It is not strange that we are in peril of worse than weakness: there is this second danger, most terrible, most disastrous of all. A man may meet in his neighbor a bitter enemy, himself erect in the consciousness of integrity. He may meet associates who frown on him, or friends whose hands are held back, and their tongues silent, and their eyes turned away from him: he may weep in silence, but he blesses God for the power to be true. He may be pursued by the party which he chose and trusted for the accomplishment of ends, to him most holy, by him most devoutly sought; he may be reproached with bitter words, with more bitter deeds, his name pronounced with every tone and every epithet of hate or wrath or scorn; but the devout trust of his soul inspires him with a deeper peace. Whatever the power which sways the country so dear to his whole heart, it may stand to him as emblem of a spiritual banishment; he may dwell on her soil, but the mother casts him off; his own pure love still soothes and gladdens him. The very church, through which came to him the consecration of baptism and the promises of communion, which welcomed his infancy and watched over his youth and accepted his earlier

confessions, which he has loved in life and will love in death, repels him as faithless and unworthy;—his heart loves but the more tenderly; all unacknowledged, he shall weep in her sorrows, he shall pray for her peace, he shall give to her his cares and toils,

“Till toils and cares shall end.”

But when he has surrendered himself, the word is not given us to speak the loss. There was an old superstition; men foolishly and fatally, it has been thought, sold their souls to the Dark Power. He gave them much; it might be money, it might be pleasure, it might be popularity, no matter what; he gave them their price so long as it was promised, then the hour came when they must pay, not receive; the poor wealth had come as a bright shadow, and is gone as a dark phantom, leaving the deep curse behind. O what is fashion, what is cheer, what the praise of a clan, what the admiration of a nation, what the blessing of a church, to the soul conscious of having won these things by servility, conscious of wanting in itself the only virtues which deserve, whether they receive or lose, these assurances of sympathy? Let nothing persuade the soul to the thralldom. Let no promise draw it from integrity. Let no wealth be large enough to buy it. Say for ever, I am

from God, I must return to God. Let me give back into his bosom, richer than it came to me, the spirit which he hath breathed. Man is dear; dearest of all is God.

So we may go down into the deepest valley, alone; so we may see the shadow lengthening and darkening over us, no vision behind or before; so we may feel the pressure as of a cold hand, the presence as of death, unfriended and forsaken: humbly the heart shall look up to the opening heavens, and exclaim, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me: thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.

Here too let the voice of thanksgiving and of prayer arise:—

Eternal Being, most glorious in thyself, manifesting thyself in numberless forms to thy creatures, strengthen my thought to look up unto thee! Thy power is mighty; thy dominion unbounded. Thine is nature, filled with order and beauty and ministries to every living soul. Thine is the life which flows through all; thine the law, so benignant and harmonious, which assigns to all things their powers and their places, and with which thou governest the whole for ever. Blessed be thou! Blessed, thou who hast formed man in thine immortal image! Thee let me praise with my voice, for voice thou hast given me to speak the wonders of thy creation.

This mind to see, this soul to feel and rise and soar, thou hast given ; thine, the voice ascending from their inmost depths to call on thee, to bless thee, to celebrate thee, while it goeth up toward the heavenly source ; source of all art thou. From thee we come, with heaven and earth. From thee we come, quickened by thy breath, thy spirit enlivening us, enlightening, empowering us to be like thee, kindred to thee, thou high and holy One ! and so kindred to each other through sympathies and attractions of heaven and earth, of the immortal and the mortal. Thou hast connected us with all which lives and moves on earth, in the waters, the air, and skies. Dearer than all, thou makest man to his brother. So dear is soul to soul, let me bless thee, source of love, and raise from my heart the living hymn : always of thy power let me sing. I can never speak how good thou art ; I can never think how beautiful thy love and law and inspiration.

Unspeakable thou art ; and I come unto thee, thy child, in his ignorance and weakness and sin, to bless thee and to ask thy presence. Reveal to me, reveal to all about me, the mystery of our everlasting kindred ; and enable us to fulfil the duties which it brings with it. The kindness so dear to me from others, inspire into my soul to them ; that I may love each soul of man



and woman and child, putting from me far away whatever is unkind, selfish, proud, envious, revengeful, and cherishing within me whatever is kind and gentle, humble, joyous in the joy of each, forgiving if ever I suffer wrong. And do thou, Father of all, grant that I may receive from others those affections which my heart for ever asks ; from every eye, grant that I may see and welcome the light of love ; from every tongue, words of truth and kindness ; from every hand, the signs of brotherly communion. Save me from the bitter sorrow of knowing that I have an enemy ; save me from the bitter experience of secret animosity ; save me from everything which dissolves the sacred union and sympathy of human hearts.

Thou who art alike Truth and Love, inspire me, moreover, with that reverence of thy divine law, that loyalty to thine everlasting kingdom, which shall save me from the perils even of this our dearest kindred. Show me that thou art my true Father ; that in thee dwell the sources and elements of all the mother's love and the sister's tenderness and the brother's affinity ; that in thee liveth evermore whatever is of true kindness and of everlasting attraction. So help me to love all as in thee, to bless them in thy name, to serve them in thy spirit. Out from the holiest centre of my soul, draw thou forth the sympa-

thies, flowing from thee, wherewith I shall suffer with all who suffer, and rejoice with all who rejoice, and weep with all who weep, and fulfil with thee thine everlasting law of service.

Thus, O Lord, prepare me by becoming servant of all to be free from all ; by serving them in thee, to decline all service which is contrary to thy reason and law ; by worshipping only thee, to rise into that peaceful region, wherein I shall feel more deeply than ever all the influences and effects of human kindness, but learn therein the more thoroughly to dwell in thy house, by thine altar, within the shrine of the Eternal Truth. For nothing of love which man can give me, suffer me to forsake the right even in thought ; for nothing of ill which man may do, suffer me to follow the voice which calls me from thee. From my soul, and from all souls, thou Life of the world, remove every discord, every falsehood to thee, to each other ; disperse every cloud of evil and falsehood, and let thy light break forth, that each shall see and all shall walk therein.

So, freed from hate and envy and every sin, we will praise thee with all our hearts ; we will praise thee with sweeter and holier hymns ; we will praise thee with purer and noble deeds ; we will praise thee with one heart and one unwearyed tongue. Thee, Father, thy children shall worship in the services of universal communion, of heavenly and everlasting peace. Amen.

## SECTION II.

## UNKINDNESS.

WE may seem to have anticipated the topic. We have indeed been drawn to speak of it, only however in certain aspects, and even then as illustrating the power which hope of kindness may gain to weaken men into dependence or to seduce them into sin. We proceed now to more direct and extended views of unkindness.

The light which the eye asks, may likewise put it out. The sound which the ear invites, may deafen it. Fragrance may sicken us with excess. Food or drink may not only produce pain, but destroy life. Nature may become a burden to us. Wealth may become our woe. Just so the qualities of man which each person feels as the signs of kindred, may turn to us another side. The mind whose rays have shined on us as a brighter morning, may cast darkness as of blacker midnight. The soul whose voice has been as sweetest music, may pour out harsh and deadening dissonance. Thoughts, more fragrant once than eastern gales, may cease to cheer, and ocean lose the smile which they lighted for a while; now they come as from low, pestilential depths. The influence from others which quickened us, still flows into the heart,

but it has ceased to quicken; the wine is bitter, the water poisons, the very bread is turned to a stone or a scorpion. Man is oppressor; the weal of one is the bane of another. There is alienation, there is unkindness.

The significance of this last word has been often enough suggested. Man forms one kind; hence relations of kindred: the practical acknowledgment of these relations constitutes kindness; the reverse, unkindness. In proportion to the power which this feeling of kindness possesses within us, are our sympathies with others, and, that which we now consider, our sensibility to their sympathy with us. The more there is in us of the man, as the more we shall rejoice in the love which welcomes us, so likewise the more shall we sorrow for the unkindness which repels us.

It may be said, and the saying is perfectly true, that through suspicion and jealousy we may sometimes create, oftener exaggerate, such evils. Against all such dispositions we should certainly guard ourselves, repressing the selfish desire of special attentions and honors, training ourselves to look into the deeper and better principles of men, rather than to dwell on the lower and the worse, and endeavoring to interpret all particular actions and words as favorably as reason and justice will permit. Doubtless by such

methods we should escape a large amount of those sufferings which we now bear in consequence of our readiness to suppose and impute unkindness.

After every such subtraction, we shall have some remainder of unquestionable grief. What its forms may be,—this is our first inquiry; how we should avoid and endure them, is the second.

1. The forms are as numerous as the points of conscious—it might almost be added unconscious—connection of man with man. There are some so large, so palpable, reaching so far and operating through such conspicuous agencies, that all perceive them readily and confess them frankly, save indeed as in those instances wherein the very magnitude of the evil gives it a character of grandeur, and, exciting admiration, allays our horror. Witness the ravages of war, wherein, claiming to be scourge of God, or pressing to the fulfilment of a blind, overmastering destiny, or, it may be, confessing the insatiate lust of power, some conqueror overruns beautiful lands, laying fields waste, burning cities, destroying the armies which gather for their altars and their hearths, and sometimes carrying death into the midst of defenceless households. Witness the oppressions by which the tyrant enthral a nation, the lord his vassals, some bishop

or priest the votaries of his church, some master, reinforced by law, by custom, by popular sentiment, the slaves whom he has inherited or purchased. Witness any form of unkindness which has gone out from the private heart into a social or national system of action; which from small beginnings has grown into large dimensions; which from diffusion and establishment has enabled itself to take the holy names of government, of law, even of divine institution; all its elements of evil so thoroughly combined, of mass so vast and compact, that we lose sight of the sin in the grandeur which it clothes itself withal. Who can tell the story of what the soul of man endures under these mountainous wrongs? We may pass by the sufferings of the myriads seduced by the promises of glory to the realities of carnage and death, and of others whom the casualties of war involve in the destruction which it carries with it. There are thousands of more secret sorrows. Horace saw something of these when, from all images which might illustrate it, he selected this one: "Wars abhorred by mothers." There, in the sad retirement, where the wife, the mother, the son unripe for fierce deeds, the daughter mourning with her mother, perhaps for her own sorrows, remember and weep for husband, for son, for brother, for lover, gone to spend their strength, to shed their

blood, for tyrannous power, we may learn something of what comes when man forgets his kind. We have only then to go into some city where wealth overrules all things, and the poor sink into want, and seek a temporary solace in the drunkenness and the brutality which plunge them into lower depths, or into some country where now and then the proud mansion rises amidst wretched huts, and laborers, serfs, slaves, spend their weary days and do their unwilling work for others, not their own ; and in these and the like cases we see, that the suffering of man from man is no fancy, — that there is something besides sickliness of sensibility to draw forth tears from the eyes, to load the tongue with lamentations, even to drain the fountains of sorrow dry, to silence the voice by despair.

It is, alas ! no dream, that man becomes many times unkind. In such instances, let us but pass through the illusions which cheat us into admiration of sin for its splendor, then the stern fact appears. But dreadful as this fact, thus seen, really is, we have now, not the magnificent cruelty to contemplate, so much as the petty wrongs of every day. The elements and qualities are essentially one in the great and in the little, as the elements and qualities of the great earth are one with those of the clod, or of the boundless ocean with those of the single

wave or drop, or of the atmosphere or the day with the air which we breathe or the ray which penetrates the eye. But as some vast continent, some wide sea, the air or light coming down afar off from us over other regions, fail to produce a direct and palpable effect on us, so the grander facts and movements of the world seem too distant to produce any vivid or conscious impression. Bring the facts nearer home and into direct relations to us, then we feel them. Let us look at some such near examples.

As in some countries and ages rank, so in our country during this age wealth, is the first indication of an established unkindness. We let the questions alone of the origin, the external effects, and the social remedies of this unnatural schism, simply assuming the fact in its bearing on each person. The rich man, whether proud or humble, feels that his wealth brings on him suspicion, jealousy, he knows not how many forms of alienation, from many less favored than himself. The poor man, whether envious or generous, feels equally that his poverty brings on him contempt, distrust, he knows no better what and how many forms of alienation, from those whom he deems happier than himself. There may be mistakes and exaggerations on both sides; but those very mistakes and exaggerations increase the mutual unkindness. Be-



cause the one is accounted overbearing, the other becomes either servile or insolent. Or else, because the poor man is despised as mean, the rich man comes to treat him according to his low estimate of his character and state. The sympathy of kind dissolves in the antipathy of class; and instead of the rich and the poor meeting together in the common consciousness of the one Divine Presence uniting both, they pass off into separation and distance, repelling and repelled.

Similar in this result is the influence of religious sectarianism. As Christianity is the holiest fact in the history of man, so by consequence Christendom, or the communion produced by Christianity between the souls of men, is the holiest relation which the creative power has established. And yet, as, according to the old proverb, the corruption of the best things makes them the worst, so might we venture almost to consider the Church parent of the sorest unkindnesses. Those two great divisions, descending from the mediæval times to our own, the Greek and the Roman churches; the later divisions, familiar to us all, Papal and Protestant; among Protestants, of Athanasian and Socinian, of Calvinist and Arminian, of Trinitarian and Unitarian, of old church and new, and thousands of other variations; — of what hatreds and discords,

not yet allayed, have these been sources and supports! We present no question here of the truth in one or another of these bodies; we look at them only as parents of an unkindness to which myriads are the victims. Every man knows that, by connection with any particular denomination, he is severed from a large, probably the larger, portion of Christendom, and that, wherever he goes, his religious faith is, not an attraction, but a repulsion. Say not, the evil is slight, it takes from him no property, inflicts no pain, leaves him his family, his friends, his own religious fellowship. Thou a Christian! and speak such words? Hast thou yet to learn that man has within him what is dearer than life and property and friends and a sectarian fellowship? Go thou, and ask what Jesus meant by the relation which absorbs in one brother and sister and mother. Learn thou that there is an unkindness which the soul knows when men presume to bereave it of its immortal rights, and loved ones add their Amen to the anathema!

These, and examples might be multiplied indefinitely, present states of fixed unkindness. We may pass now to such as are occasional and temporary. Even in the sanctuary of home, that epitome of society, the nurse of the State, the image of the Church, what sorrows are borne from unkindness! The husband and wife, un-

conscious of their holy and intimate union, seem sometimes to forget each other, or even to indulge in bitterness breaking out into deeds or words which leave their poison in the soul. Children, their sacred natures unperceived, their angelic ministry forgotten, meet harshness when they look and secretly sigh for tenderness; brothers and sisters learn too early what neglect and unkindly passions may be anticipated from the world; and parents sometimes know the sharpness of the pang, not unmingled with remorse, which comes of having a thankless child. Most commonly, to be sure, the family may so far fulfil its offices and its destinies as to produce a large amount of solid enjoyment; but seldom a whole life passes without bearing, amid its memorials of love and peace, some darker remembrances of hours made sad by the passages, even if rare and brief, of unkindness met in the hours of trust and of better hope.

So, too, when we go out into the business of the world. Such the prevalence of that selfish spirit which forgets kindred and all nobler claims, that commerce betrays in all the methods which it pursues a latent, if not an open, distrust of human virtue. Credit seems indeed a false word; for who trusts in reality the truthfulness of his neighbors? The creditor who dares not trust without his hand upon his neigh-

bor's property, and the debtor who recognizes nothing as due but that which he cannot withhold,—how sad the relation which brings the one into connection with the other! There is virtue, there is honesty, there is nobleness of soul; but how does the mutual antagonism which is deemed the natural state of the different parties in pecuniary intercourse, cover up and eclipse the brightness of these greater qualities! The buyer and the seller, the borrower and the lender, the creditor and the debtor, why should their transactions be so marked with concealments and evasions, and sometimes even frauds, that these vices are scarcely deemed strange, and the cunning bargain is applauded for sagacity, with seldom a denunciation of the meanness which it involves from first to last?—Perhaps there is no form of human intercourse, in which, if we were to trace it out, we should not be compelled to acknowledge equal expressions of the alienations thus filling society and the heart with bitterness: a bitterness, let it be remembered, as much deeper than natural pain as the soul is more vital than the body, as the kindred of man with man is more entire and intimate than of man with the outward world.

2. If it be possible, we should seek to conduct ourselves in such a manner as to avoid these experiences. Besides rooting out from our minds

all reasonless suspicions, all passionate jealousies, we should go farther still, and put away the prides and the envies of class, of party, of sect, of family; we should widen our patriotism into philanthropy, and merge sectarianism in communion; we should learn to look through the close folds, so often artificial and sometimes almost transparent, in which men are wont to wrap up their virtues even more than their vices, into the holier recess, the dim and hidden shrine, where, in every spirit, the Divinity dwells enthroned. Thus, if we discern wrong more clearly, and feel its presence with more acuteness of grief, yet we shall see likewise beyond it, and reverence the humanity which it obscures, but can never destroy. Thence we shall learn to approach every man without either scorn or envy, without pride and without servility, removed infinitely from hate, from wrath, from revenge, full of love, of meekness, of forgiveness, and so touching the divine element in him with the divine peace in ourselves. No parade of kindness, no boast of purity, no pretence of piety, no forcing of charity, let there be; repel from the heart such emptiness; but the heart in perfect simplicity, let that give out the sweetness of its unstudied, unaffected gentleness and trust. If this prevention cannot save us from injury, nothing can. If our love will not call forth answering love; if

our trust will not beget trust; if our childlike innocence will not summon into life a kindred freedom from guile and cruelty, — we may not despair, we may continue waiting, praying, hoping; but let us never yield to the promise, so often presented in so many forms, that if we invoke the chief of demons he will help us, with craft and power of his, to cast out the demons which, we think, possess our brother, and through him harry others.

If, after all, we cannot prevent the evil from coming upon us, what then? Simply, that which cannot be avoided must be endured. As the heroic spirit refuses to sink under the presence of pain; as the generous soul lifts itself up against the weight of loss and want; so, but never with pride, never with the impiety which claims strength without God, accept and bear this other and heavier load. An old poet has taught us there is never a fortune so severe but it may be overcome by endurance.

This is well. But here we need not stop. There are two things which will convert this deep sorrow into deeper joy. First, see that the spirit of kindness grow through experience of its opposite. How this can be, some one may ask. Surely each passion produces its like, as fire kindles fire. A man angry with me rouses anger against himself. The man who injures me

in any way, not only dissolves some earlier obligations binding me to him, but provokes—literally and truly provokes—the feeling and the deed of resentment, of retaliation. The first impulse is always to pay him back in his own coin. Be it so. This is indeed the effect of injury falling upon the natural sensibilities, and viewed apart from its relations to the spiritual principles, and from the light which comes down through the conscience on all deeds and affections. Wait until that in thee which is of divine birth unveils itself; let the experience of wrong which thou art suffering pass from the outer thought into the inner consciousness, meeting there the calm insight of love; then all is changed. As amidst the winds and clouds and tempests of the dark night which gathered on the Galilean lake, and the vessel was near to sinking, a greater power than nature spake through the lips of Jesus; so let the same Christ, even if sleeping, within, appear through the tumult of warring elements, no sooner does he pronounce, Peace! than there is a great calm. It is the calm of love; over the whole soul a dove-like spirit broods, and every word which it utters is a benediction. The Divine gentleness is stronger than men's unkindness.

Besides, each victory thus won over resentful passions at once diminishes their power

over us, and gives increased ascendancy to the spirit whose prevalence is so fruitful of peace. The universal law, wherein everything acquires strength by the movement which its nature seeks, does by no means fail here; as, on the other side, everything draws in its strength by the check put upon its action, so that passion ultimately dwells in the soul as a still electric power, diffused so equably, working so quietly, that it helps the perfect harmony, brightening sometimes the edges of the cloud, never leaping forth to seathe and blacken what it touches. Thus it becomes us to make the severest experience a heavenly discipline.

The second rule is that same old and simple one, — never so old as to be obsolete, never so simple but it folds up mysteries of consolation and of strength, — Trust in God. Should everything else fail, this cannot fail. Above the confusions of earth spread serene skies. When darkness rolls its gloom over us, no less is there still an everlasting sun. Let us be cast, far from all sympathy, out upon the loneliest solitude, through the desert air shines evermore one eternal light. Ages come and go, bearing to us and bearing from us our joys and our sorrows; within them, more ancient than they, surviving their courses, alone unchanged, liveth the Unspeakable One. Man rises, cursing and blessing, and



falls, brightening or fading; over and through him is that power at work, which makes all light and blessing, the Supreme Love. Trust ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.

The trust may perhaps be translated into words like these:—

Father of all, my heart is unto thee. Only thou canst support me. Let me seek consolation nowhere else. Thou canst forsake no soul which thou hast made. We wander many times from thee, forgetting our divine home and our human endearments; but thine eye seeth us when we are a great way off, thou waitest for our return, thou callest and welcomest us back, and makest us blessed in thee and in each other. Thine is the encircling spirit which girds us round, and draws our souls together, and makes us one for ever. Touch our hearts with this spirit now, that all unkindness may pass in the unbounded love.

Save me, Father, I beseech thee, from reasonless suspicions and from cruel jealousies. Open my eyes to see that in my friends and neighbors, and in my enemies, which is of thee, which reveals thine image and makes them in affinity with thee and with heaven. And when I behold in them aught of hatred, of wrath, of revenge, of pride or envy, or any selfish and bitter tem-

per, toward myself or toward others, enable me sincerely and wholly to mourn over the evil, and to pray that it may be removed and forgiven. Leave me not to rejoice or take any pleasure in seeing them do evil; suffer me not to nourish any pride of triumph, any complacency in accounting myself better than they, any boastfulness as if I were not like other men. Awaken within me brotherly kindness, that I may feel their sin as if it were mine, and their grief as grieved with them, and their degradation as my own, and anticipate the remorse which shall follow with them as a sadness which I too share. When thus I see them sin, help me to know myself, and to remember what there has been of hate in me, what of unreasonable anger, what of revenge, what of high boasting and low repining, everything selfish, everything bitter and godless, in myself, my feeling, my thought, my word, my deed. So let the sight of sin lead me to repentance of sin and to sympathy with my brother. So let it help to cure me, and through me to do something for the welfare of others.

When thus in myself and in those about me I see the selfishness and the deformity of unkind feelings and deeds and words, enable me to interpret thereby the fiercer strifes, the tyrannies of power, the servilities of weakness, the great oppressions, and the debasing thraldoms, by

which men have been so long overwhelmed and this earth hath been burdened so heavily. Man, thy dear child, O Father! And earth, the fair abode which thou hast made for him, that in it he may grow towards perfection, and enter into the everlasting harmony! Help, Lord, thy child in his weakness and sorrow and sin. Help him in thy mercy to unlearn his errors and to return unto thee, for thou art love. Strengthen the souls now taught of thee to bless, that they may be patient and trustful; that they may labor still for the union and peace of mankind; that they may wait in earnest effort and prayer until they shall see war and slavery, and the discords of nations, of parties, of sects, passing away from the earth, and thy children becoming all one in thy beloved Son.

And every grievance which I may bear, either now or at any time, or which any child of thine may suffer, enable us to sustain with trustful and steadfast soul. Make us like unto thee, supreme and universal Father. Thy sun riseth upon the evil and upon the good; thy rain cometh down upon the just and upon the unjust: let us prove ourselves children of thine by growth into kindred perfection. Enable us to love, even if we are not loved; to salute, if we are not saluted; if we have enemies, to love them; if we are cursed, only to bless still, and

from the heart; if we are hated, to do good with all sincerity; if we are despitefully used, and pursued even with malignity and fraud and violence, to pray for the injurious, forgiving them in our souls, and desiring to dwell with them for ever in our Father's house. Father, breathe this spirit into each heart, into all the relations of mankind; that so thy kingdom may come, and so thy will be done in earth, even as it is done in heaven. Amen.

## CHAPTER IV.

### GLADNESS AND SADNESS.

NATURE, both as the great whole and as the particular wealth, we can scarce forbear repeating, is perpetual minister to us of delight; so likewise, and perhaps for this very reason, occasion of pain; both directly and through supplies which we gain or which we lose. Man, as knit to us through separate persons in nearer affinities, communicates to us higher delight, deeper pain, as we meet kindness and love, or as we suffer from alienation and unkindness. So far we have already gone. There is another step to take. Each person, in and of himself, from the mysterious depths within him, derives an element of joy; this withdrawn, he is left in sorrow. To this topic, in the twofold aspect thus suggested, let us now look.

## SECTION I.

## GLADNESS.

THIS natural and spontaneous outflow of the life stands in clear relation to two modes of our existence, the body acting upon the mind, and the mind acting within and upon itself.

1. Besides the influence which we feel as pleasure, there is another ministry wherein the body serves the soul. Pleasure seems to suppose the presence of an external object exciting a certain sense, as of gratified appetite. The more interior gladness, whether such pleasure accompanies it or not, belongs to a somewhat different order of experience. It supposes only the healthful and harmonious condition of the body, wherein the vital power, the spontaneous energy, the affections, and thoughts, all operate without check: the gladness, which is always at the centre of the soul, is able to flow out, to gush, to leap, it may be wildly, at all events freely and naturally.

The bodily condition of this free joy has been spoken of as healthful. But it is healthful in a different sense from that in which we commonly ascribe health to a man. Such health is sometimes found disjoined even from cheerfulness or content. Some persons of sound, and even vig-

orous body, are full of weak and diseased thoughts, dark, gloomy, despondent. Others, of what appears unsound and even feeble frame, are full of strong and vigorous thoughts, bright, gladsome, and sometimes gay,—full always of hope. Thus many times sickness, instead of being an occasion of depression, reveals the sweetest and withal the liveliest qualities of our nature. Thus in weakness the spirit is strong; in very pain the heart bursts forth into an unsubdued glee; and often in the last hours, so frequently deemed those of most awful solemnity, the man passes away from all visible relations to the world amidst utterances of triumphant joy or of celestial peace.

What do we learn here? Not that health, because it may be connected with opposite states of mind, is worthless; nor yet that disease is otherwise than undesirable in itself; either of these suppositions would be no less than absurd. But we do learn, that there is a deeper element of health than usually bears the name. There are conditions of body precluding the possibility of good cheer, let the soul itself be pure as it may; just as there are those conditions of body wherein the pure heart can scarce choose but overflow with its inner gladness. These conditions, and their laws, science has as yet but slightly explored. These, neither work

nor sport nor medicine is able to impart. Of these, neither the weight which one can lift, nor the toil which he can go through, nor the exposure to which he can lay himself out and gain strength from it, furnishes any measure. There is a health even of the body which eludes all such tests, and exists without such appliances, and passes almost unquestioned of science. And yet the most common language involves the fact. When we speak of some persons as nervous, of others as phlegmatic, of a third class as sanguine, — when we talk so familiarly of the cold-blooded and those of hot blood, of the hot head and the cool head, of the warm heart and the cold heart, and so throughout our speech concerning men, — unconscious as we may be of any meaning but what the words convey through daily use, we still employ phrases which, applied indeed to the mind, indicate secret relations and influences of the body, and, whether correct or incorrect, denote an instinct which has anticipated science, in referring states of feeling and thought to states of the natural constitution.

Here every man must be physician to himself, or rather let Nature do her own work in her own way. When the sole question is, how the body can be brought into the best state for work and for endurance, science may come in and give an-



swer. But where the question becomes, how the body can be raised into the health out of which freedom and glad thoughts shall flow from the heart into deed and into word, we have yet to wait for the clear, full answer. The points at which the inner life and the outer touch and penetrate each other, — the lines which run between the intellectual sphere and the animal, bounding them, but not separating, opening each to reciprocal and perpetual influence from the other, — these and the methods of their interaction are finer and more ethereal than any science has yet uncovered. Only Nature and her secret instincts, felt through the experience of life, instruct us in these mysteries.

But we must heed the teaching. That which is found to disturb the pure, deep gladness of the soul must be avoided. That which is found to make it purer and deeper must be sought.

2. Then, with the body ministering to the soul we have also the soul acting within and upon itself, and so quickening its own free joy. Every one knows something of this. We may take an illustration from the fancy. Suppose some instrument, the organ, for instance, touched by the hands of man, or the *Æolian* harp, whose strings are swept by the winds, so changed by some mysterious power, that of itself, from some

soul within, some will living through all its parts, it shall come to move and give forth the sweet or the swelling tones. Here we should have a visible type of man's unseen nature, a soul of music for ever delivering melody from within through the whole sphere which it fills with its presence or reaches with its voice.

Nor is the soul powerful to send out only the glad voice. There is joy in that. But there is another joy still. As it flows freely forth outward, so with the same freedom does it draw the tide of harmony inward. The eye looks abroad, but cannot roll itself back to look within. The voice goes out into the air and ear, and dissolves; it cannot return to the source from which it comes, there to nourish the old strain, keeping what we give. Thus through all the powers and organs of nature. Not so with the spiritual being and deed. The soul looks within just as naturally as it looks without; and the eye which rejoices to rest on the sky and clouds, and the green earth, and the circle of the ocean, finds equal joy when it bends back and rests on those silent visions of truth and beauty and love which rise up from the living centre to meet the thoughtful sight. Fast indeed as the soul gives itself forth, it comes back; it dies not with sound in a distant air, but still dwells through every utterance in its own mystic home, brood-

ing with conscious love over the deep and boundless abyss of its own being and workings. Here are the highest movements of its joy; here, the fountains of peace; here, the sources of immortal strength. It has here the closet into which it may daily enter, and shut the door, leaving the world outside, save as it is reflected by the mind through which the soul perceives it shining with heavenly light; it prays here to the Father who liveth, as he seeth, in secret, hidden amidst sunlike brightness, beheld of none, beholding all,—receiving of none, giving himself to all; and the vision thus met in our loneliness goes out before us into the world, that in the midst of men we are alone with God, and over every day his light rests, the morning of an eternal Sabbath.

This overflow from the soul naturally tends out and around into society. It expresses itself in action rather than in discourse; and both its action and its speech are spontaneous and festive, not studied, profound, composed. Ancient methods of devotion provided for it some religious forms, as feasts and annual solemnities and pomps of grand commemorations. Scarce anything of the devout mirth remains with us; little else but our hymns, and these are as often sad and dark as light and gladsome. When shall we learn that there is a Christianity of

mirth, as there is a Christianity of sorrow?—when shall we come to bless God in the fulness of joy, as well as to seek him in the depression of sorrow? And, thinking of this festivity of the soul, I wish to suggest something which may befit it, as prayer befits its more serious states, and yet shrink almost from essaying the task. We may call men to body their gladness in prayer also, but it would be necessarily less the prayer of confession, of supplication, of want asking supply, than of praise and thanksgiving and a soul already full and rejoicing. Indeed, to make it what we feel in such hours, we should translate some triumphal song, shouted with exulting voice, and accompanied by instruments of music and the irrepressible dance of the feet and the soul, into the gentler and humbler utterance of the Christian hymn;—if unsung, yet these may be the thoughts.

Blessed be thou, Mighty One, Fountain of Beauty and Joy! I see thee, Divinest Presence, in the boundless sky and the green earth and the rolling sea. Thou comest to us in light and air, in sunshine and shower, in day and night, in changing seasons, in sights and sounds, in forms and movements of unspeakable and everlasting glory. My heart blesseth thee continually, Mighty One! The world is thine, and full of thee! Make my joy holy, my gladness

heavenly and perpetual, the mirth of my soul calm, and every word and deed full of sweetness and peace.

Thy world is so great and glorious! I bless thee, who hast gathered its greatness and glory into me; into my body, so fair, so perfect, alive, alive in thee; into my soul, so glad I cannot tell its joy, so vast in desire, so quick and large in thought, living in such a jubilee, free within the city of God, joyous in memory, the hope leaping forth from within to invite the new birth from the future. Blessed be thou, Father of light! Let me rest in thee, daily, for ever. When I cannot speak to thee, and can scarce remember thee, from excess of gladness, O then let my joy praise thee, and become worship.

Father! I bless thee that I live. I bless thee for the life everywhere streaming around me. I bless thee for thy creation. I bless thee! Inspire me with new love. Thy love flow deeper, deeper down into all hearts; upward, for ever upward, thy love draw thy children unto thee, lost in the immensity of thy being, in the infinitude and eternity of thy light. Only Thou art evermore All in all.

Infinite Silence! spread thou still around me. Let nothing disturb the Sabbath;—no voice, but to speak of thee to my heart; no sight, but to reveal thy presence near me, within me; no joy,

but to come of thee; to bear me up to thee. Might the vision and the peace dwell with me for ever!

But I am in thy world; thy children are with me. Let me love them all, and go forth to serve them, to be minister unto them of gladness and joy from thee. Fill me with thyself, and help me to build up my whole being in harmony with thine eternal order, after the pattern which thou showest me in thine holy mountain. Even in the hours of darkness which I cannot shut my eyes even now from foreseeing, enable me to rejoice in thee, preparing through severer disciplines for every service to thy children, for every duty to thee.

So shall my soul overflow to thee, thou Source of good! So shall I join with all devout minds in celebrating thy perfection. So through heaven, from earth, out of holy hearts, shall pure joy go up, and holy worship be offered, and voices and deeds be hallowed; so, when every sound is hushed, the silent soul shall become living hymn. Amen.

## SECTION II.

## SADNESS.

THERE is a truth, as we feel the tenderness, in language so often repeated from a celebrated German writer: "The Sanctuary of Sorrow!" how many have found it sacred and a temple where God is source of Peace! "The Worship of Sorrow!" God himself must live for ever, a boundless sun of joy. But to us he must appear, not only in a clear, cloudless air, but through mists and falling rain and falling tears. We cannot help learning, through experiences of sorrow which rise at last into peace, how true those words of the heart:

Who never ate with tears his bread,  
Who not through night's sad, weary hours  
In weeping sat upon his bed,  
He knows you not, ye heavenly Powers.

It must be so. The best instrument is sometimes out of tune. And before that, it must go through the making; and, this process going on, it may give out very often, not melody, but harshness and jargon. Men have always had a feeling, clear or dim, that the way to light lies through darkness; that night is earlier than day; that out of the depth is the ascent to the height. Hereafter we may be called to trace this course

in a greater sphere,—to contemplate some deeper sorrow than comes of breaking up the instinctive gladness of the heart, some depth of night in which the soul may seem to lose even the hand which alone can lead it through this darkness. To this sorrow, which perhaps cannot weep, which tears can scarcely soothe, we do not refer now. We speak here but of the sadness which either some hidden disease of the body brings over the mind, or the soul itself produces in its silent working.

Nay, there are some extremes or exaggerations of a natural sadness, which we may likewise pass over. Such is the melancholy bordering on madness, sometimes, as in the case of Cowper, passing into a permanent, though partial, insanity. Such also the other melancholy, half real, half fantastic, which some poets sing and cherish, and which oftener imitators have in their servility sought and affected, perhaps gained by their sickly endeavors, vainly dreaming that thus they have established a genuine relationship to nobler souls through virtue of their weaknesses. Such, again, are griefs connected with domestic and social relations, and with disappointments in our various pursuits. Leaving all such forms of sorrow, we come to those which the world may not see, with which a second person may not be able to sympathize,



in which the heart alone knoweth its own bitterness.

1. Besides the influence which we feel as pain, there is an experience somewhat deeper wherein the soul becomes aware of suffering from the body. Pain seems to presuppose the presence of some force either withdrawing the object which gratifies the appetite, or disturbing the appetite itself, so that nothing is able to supply the want. The more interior experience, to which we have given the name of sadness, accompanied by whatever state of the appetites, is of another order of feelings. It supposes, however, when arising from causes in the body, something unhealthy, some discord of the organs, by which the vital power, the spontaneous energy, the affections and thoughts, are either checked or impaired; the sadness, which is always perhaps embosomed in joy, which is at the least its everlasting shadow, moving wherever it moves, dwelling wherever it dwells, is forced out into the consciousness, is felt, is seen, holding back every gush, staying every leap, of the flowing soul, restraining all freedom, shading all light.

The bodily state through which the mind is led into such darkness, we have seen, is unhealthy. Not of necessity, however, in the common sense of the word. But we need not repeat

the thoughts already suggested. It is enough to say, that, besides the endeavor to find out and remove the sources of such disorder, we turn it while it lasts to some ministry of good. The central idea which we carry with us through all these meditations, the fact that there is a soul of goodness even in evil things, — nay, that things we call evil, considered as real existences, as true creations of God, are, like all others, essentially good, — will hardly permit us to apply thoroughly the doctrine which Christian ages have imported from Pagan philosophy, calling us to despise the body, to scorn the world, to detach ourselves as entirely as we can from both, to anticipate death, as it were, by dissolving the connections of the soul with the body, and through the body with nature. Not the less should the soul affirm its higher worth, its imperial power and authority. When the incorruptible soul feels itself weighed down by the corruptible body, we should turn the depression into a discipline of virtue, growing by that which wastes our strength. Unseen, unhonored, far from praise and from show, let the virtuous will supply more than the frailer health takes away, nursing in this seclusion the powers destined to rise and soar in celestial air. Let us call up calm thoughts and childlike trusts and hopes from the very region of shadows. If they come, the

heart regains its peace; if they seem awhile to stay from us, and leave us sad and dark, let us still hold courage fast. Can we see no promise of brighter hours? Let us sit quietly down, and take such as come with lowliness. Does the stream run over us too strong and heavy for us to rest? Let us try to bear both the rush of the current and the wear of the heart. If we can gain no loftier wisdom, we may yet learn to wait in patience. The law, be sure, however, is, that out of silent endurance strength at last shall grow.

2. Then with the body breaking in upon the soul, we have also the soul breaking itself up, scattering and deadening its own freedom and peace. There is an inward discontent, the mind, that is, ceasing to contain itself, to hold its elements and powers together, these all severed and strewn, torn apart and enfeebled. The true state of the soul presenting us the image of the universal harmony, this inward disorder has its emblem in the dark chaotic mass. Or, take again the lighter fancy, some living organ, some harp playing of its own musical soul. As an unskilful hand may touch the organ; as a rough gust may sweep the strings of the wind-harp; so, when the one or the other moves voluntary from the mystery which gives it soul, other than harmony may sometimes flow; the very soul may

become tuneless, the secret life may reveal some inward decay. Then the strain, so sweet before that it seemed of heaven, comes to sound with a strange bitterness; almost, we might say, to steam up heavily from beneath, rather than pour itself lightly down, an angelic melody, from above;—type of the unseen power disturbed, the soul a discord within, making the whole sphere which it fills or reaches unharmonious like itself.

Perhaps the man strives to shut up within himself the sad sense of discord. Not the less real for this his unrest, not the less deep, but rather the contrary. The tide flowing out might relieve the heart; coming in, sweeping over the whole strand, and creeping into every retreat, it brings over it a heavier weight. The power by which the soul recreates the gladness over which it broods, has a reverse action; sadness is also doubled by reflection. Thought bends itself back, its eye turned within, no longer as blessed angel, not even as cheerful daylight, but as form of darkness,—in extreme instances, as demon shrouded in his own gloom. The loneliness which once was dearer than all society becomes oppressive, and society but casts us back upon the inner desolation. The skies are leaden above us, the earth hard and barren under us. Hope itself droops; the past

seen as a loss, the present as a weariness, the future lowers upon us as some spectral vision.

If, in hours so unapt for vigorous thought, and even for the simple utterance of prayer, any person should chance to open this page, he may possibly find something not unsuited to his state in the passage which follows. Without rhyme, as it is, and rude as it may be deemed in verse, it has perhaps sentiment for the heart, as it has certainly truth in its object. The beautiful story which suggested it will at once recur to the mind.

O Thou, whose step was on the sea; whose voice  
Amid the storm went o'er the dashing waves,  
And uttered tones of peace! be with us now :  
Be with thy people in their fears, for hope,  
For living hope and endless peace. Our all  
Thou art; nor ask we more. No phantom form,  
No shape of terror from the nether world,  
No form of evil, can we fear with thee.

The surge foams o'er us; our bark is by the rocks;  
Night, dark as of old in Egypt, gathers round,  
And spreads, and deepens on the wave. No sight,  
But of the reddening path which our keel makes,  
And of the crested foam, and of the stream  
Which the lightning pours, as it flames, and is gone.  
No sound, but of the rolling thunder; the crash,  
The doubling crash, amid the pauses of the gust;  
And the groan, stifled as it breaks.

'T is well:

Thou who didst walk the Galilean sea,  
Lone, save that God was with thee, that dark night,  
And still its waves; thou, thou art with us, ours,

Our Saviour and our Hope: nor wilt thou leave,  
O Lord, thy ransomed ones to die. Thy voice,  
Even though we hear it not, is in our souls,  
That we are glad. And we will trust thy love;  
And we will ask of thee to be our guide,  
Through life, and from this earth, upward to heaven.

## CHAPTER V.

### SUCCESSIONS OF LIFE.

MEN have always illustrated the processes of life by those analogies which Nature presents. The morning comes to us, fresh and glowing, and keeps steadily brightening until the mid-day, then rests in the long still of afternoon, while the sun is waiting to go down. The year opens with the sweet breath of spring, thence advances to the midsummer, and after months of growth and brightness passes into the fall, rounding itself at last into the prophetic winter. All growths which come within our observation multiply the analogies. There is the shoot, rising from the earth which covers its root; there are the foliage and the flowering; there is the long ripening; there is the sure and final decay. The fact renews itself continually, from the little wild-flower by the brook, through all ranks of vegetation, to the tree which outlives for centuries the yearly courses of the leaves which make the forests green, and the grass and flowers which make hill and valley rejoice. All animal

tribes continue through their higher realm the same unbroken order, giving us their hours from dawn to twilight, their years passing from the melting to the falling snow, their growth from birth to dissolution. The tribes and nations of mankind seem also to connect themselves with this universal movement of Nature, repeating her everlasting circles. Perhaps worlds and systems of worlds may spread the circles out into those immense creations which stretch beyond our sight into the depths of space, which pass beyond our measures in the mysteries of the eternal nature.

As, amidst these changes, elements and the essences of things still remain, only varying their forms even by dissolution, so, through the changes of man, his essential being, the element of humanity, continues ever the same, his conscious spirit living at each stage of his growth and of his decay, nor yet dissolved, more than other elements, by separation from the body which it has quickened, but surviving in other combinations and relations at present undiscovered. Childhood, infolding the germ of a wonderful growth and fruit, opens into the flower of a youth whose leaves only drop for the fruit to ripen; age giving to manhood the short interval wherein the vital power droops and leaves the loosening body, that the secret being may go



forth into larger forms and broader courses with another spring. Thus amidst orderly change there is unchanging unity. Thus unbroken unity develops itself in manifold successions of state.

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## SECTION I.

## CHILDHOOD.

WE have a fancy to speak of childhood as the season of happiness. The fancy comes from thinking of childhood at later periods, when we feel how heavy the cares of life are, and dream that an age rid of these must be lightsome of course. But children never think themselves happier than others; they know no cares heavier than their own, no pains more acute, no sadness more deep, no disappointments more grievous, no losses larger, nothing of unkindness more piercing, more full of the mockery which sneers at the tears it has forced to flow. He who would fain go back to childhood that he may regain a free, joyous heart, either overlooks the bliss, with the sadness, of the passing hour, or has forgotten the age which he counts golden; somewhere the connection of his being is loosened to his bewildered thought. The woman will deplore the breaking of her tea-

set or the spoiling of a dress; the man will be angry with the debtor who compels him to lose his money, and bewail the wreck of his ship or the burning of his house; both will only laugh at the girl whose doll or whose doll-house has encountered some rough hand, or the boy who has lost his skates or his knife, or is angry that his playmate has struck him an insulting blow or reproached him with more insulting words. O, this is nothing! they think, and off to brooding over their own reverses and sufferings. They have forgotten the joys and the sorrows of their own fresher morning. The fact holds good for ever, the man in the child is just the same thing with the man of later years; a form of living joy, so full of quick and delicate senses as to feel with instant emotion every ruder touch of nature and of man, and every unkind movement in itself. Some fountains of gladness are as yet unopened in it; so some sad and bitter draughts are escaped. But to the degree the man in the child is developed, he has essentially the same joys and sorrows which befall other stages of his life.

Childhood has its peculiarities, notwithstanding. The man begins to feel life, to see the world and men, to meet the experiences which will in time become old and common. Now perpetual novelties invite his thought, and keep

his powers in action; thought and action sharing meantime in themselves something of the same glow which brightens everything. It is not incongruous with this peculiarity, rather in perfect harmony with it, that action has the character of spontaneous instinct. It is not the product of plan and purpose, but of impulse and desire; so, less steady and sustained than at later ages, but more rapid and full of life; changing often, it may be, both in form and direction, but in essence and end always the same, overflowing life freshly running out after fresh promises, and, as one fulfils itself, dropping the gain for other pursuit, as one fails of fulfilment, outgrowing soon the regret, and trusting still the next. This element of boundless trust pervades, indeed, all the instincts and all the activities of the child. The dark hour of suspicion lies far off in the future. Would it might never come! And as of life little has yet stretched out into the enlarging past, much spreads before the fancy looking toward the future, this trust takes especially the character of hope. What now gives joy, the heart trusts, will be permanent; what gives pain or even sadness, such grief as the young soul knows, it trusts may give place to something better before long. Each new experience opens new fountains of hope; the past speaks only as prophet

of fresh joy; and in a future now seeming almost unbounded, and with prospects numberless and bright as those with which some sunny morning we make ourselves glad in looking from a hill-top over fields and forests and mountains and wandering streams, does the young eye drink in everlasting sights of greatness and beauty. So little, indeed, thinks man yet of death, that the horizon is, as it were, removed: the circle which shuts in his sphere of life and hope lies all away from sight, at least is so far off and so dim, such brilliant hues lighting up all the dark, that he seems heir of a literal immensity.

Herein let us remark, in passing, another aspect of the soul. We speak sometimes of religious belief, as if it rested for its ground on experience; as if, without a pure and distinct element in our being which develops itself naturally in the form of belief, the mind were rather a blank, a void, into which belief might be conducted, as water through pipes into our apartments; or on which belief might be engraven, as characters on marble, or painted, as forms and colors upon canvas. Whereas experience simply works in bringing out the original element; perfect truthfulness, readiness to believe anything and everything, is the whole tendency of nature. Belief comes of itself; disbelief, dis-

trust, suspicion, is learned. The fountain of belief is itself deep in the soul, and somehow or other it will well up from the depths, do what we may to help or hinder. The character is not so much graven into us, as engrained within us; not to be chiselled out, so much as to be drawn forth and laid open and let grow. Not less in religion than in anything else. When first the eye looks around upon this great world; when, as in a new morning, the soul begins to awake amidst the mysteries of Nature; when, conscious of the answering mystery within, glowing and trembling with hope, the child dimly anticipates the instructions of the parent or the teacher;—it may be difficult to gain long attention, to fix the thought, to deepen the impression, to bring seriousness over the mind, but there is little difficulty in developing religious belief,—religious, that is, in proportion to the capacity. Tell him of the Power which created the heavens and the earth; which spreads the light, severing the darkness from it; which stretches this unseen atmosphere between the skies and the earth; which divides the land from the waters; which pours light from the sun, and makes night beautiful with moon and stars; which covers the earth with living growth, and fills water, air, and earth with quickened powers; tell him of the Presence which encircles man, and gives him

sight and every sense and all joy, with him by night and by day, breathing peace and soothing sorrow;—there is no hesitancy to take in every word. And if, as has been done, he should ask, Who made God? the question only shows the clearer that there is this irrepressible instinct of belief. It may show, perhaps, that we have given a name rather than the idea, and suggested an effect where we meant to present the cause: so the mind passes through the illusion, and presses toward the reality; the idea of cause as cause, cause truly such, not deceptively, has been raised, and will not be put by. The question, strange as it sounds, is quite natural, because man, from an irrepressible instinct, must seek just so far as he can go for the absolute reality and power.

The child's belief is twofold. He has no doubt, such his nature, in the person who seeks to teach him; he believes every word which is spoken. Nor more does he doubt, such also his nature, the presence of power in the things which he sees: this too he believes without question, or rather the belief dwells unconsciously within him,—a certainty which he no more doubts or thinks of than his own existence. To which we might add, that this presence of power contains in it the germ, the seed, or root, of the greatest idea which man can reach. Grown to

full maturity, there is given in it the mighty truth, the Existence of God. Men may come to persuade themselves, and assure others, that they are atheists; but they cannot drive out from the heart that instinct which awakens awe before the vast mystery of Power, which invites us to trust in the calm order of Wisdom, which touches us with the deep influence and beauty of Love, so folding up in itself the principles, which, contemplated in their full unity, rise into the infinite form of the Living God. So near, if dimly seen, is the Father to us even in our childhood; so, through the universal trust which nature first produces, — criticism, doubt, experience of error and illusion, reserved for the future, — does he provide for us to learn from our earliest teachers the First, Midst, Last of our love and childlike trust.

Heaven does in this sense, as perhaps in other ways, lie, not only about us, but within us, in our infancy. Might we see the day when the Presence, so real, yet so unconscious, might unfold itself with growing insight to the growing child; that so we should become always, as we advance onward in life, more and more like little children, receiving the kingdom of Heaven, as children receive the loves of their parents; entering into it, as children dwell at home; obeying our true Father, as children obey the voices of their fathers or their mothers!

Thus far the view of childhood has been presented, not of course for the direct teaching of the child, the interpretation of him to himself, but for the purpose rather of suggesting thoughts which may be helpful in our intercourse with children. Nor, in the words which follow, may the simplicity of the child's wonder amidst the mystery be fully preserved; let it stand, however, as one endeavor to put into words what is hardly a thought, but more the curious and bewildered feeling, not unmixed with awe and sometimes love, in the young soul:—

My mother teaches me an evening prayer and song. And my father reads in the Bible some mornings, and prays. What do these things mean? O would somebody tell me who God is! Let me see him.

And Sundays, when I go with my father and mother, how many people do I see come together, and there they pray, and the minister speaks much of God. Could I but see him!

I have seen a table with bread and cups, and they took the bread and ate, and the cup and drank, the minister speaking of Jesus. The Son of God! O let something show me the Son of God!

They have told me that God made the sun, and the ground, and the water, and all things, and that he is everywhere. Must I be afraid of



him? Can I find any place to hide away from him? Some persons speak and look very sadly when they talk of him; must I?

They talk of dying and going to God so awfully! It makes me afraid of dying, and afraid of God. Shall I ever see him, and be happy when I die?

O God! here, alone, I pray to thee so as I can pray. Teach me to know something of thee. Teach me, help me, to be good. Keep me from doing wrong. Keep me from disobeying my father and mother, and from being unkind to my brothers and sisters and playmates. Help me to love them all. And in this beautiful world let me see good things, and grow to be good with them. Make me like thy son Jesus; and let me live so that I shall understand how thou art my Father. Save me from being afraid of thee, and afraid to die; and fill me with the hope of heaven. My heart loves thee sometimes, though sometimes I fear. Let me love thee entirely and for ever!

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## SECTION II.

### YOUTH.

THE child lives on. He is neither happier nor less happy, neither relieved of care nor loaded

with heavier care, suffering neither less nor more of pain, rejoicing and sorrowing still. He continues to gain and to lose, to exult in kindness and to go sadly away from the altered or averted eye. The sun is going up the sky, sometimes clear, sometimes clouded, always the sun. The grass and flowers and trees are all growing; through the day, through the night, the blue sky over them, or storms beating above and to their roots. The life renews itself every day through wider channels and larger limbs and an expanding soul. The old playthings may be put aside and disdained; new toys succeed, and the same joy gladdens him when they are gained, the same grief depresses him when they are lost. Something of the child in the man may be dropped; but it is man yet, living into youth.

He cannot begin again; it is too late for that. The gush of infant life has given place to the steady flow; the first glances into the glorious world are succeeded by the constant sight of the rounding circles. Still the freshness remains, not quite worn out; the brighter, that instinct is yet alive, and that new springs of attraction continue to open in the heart. Impulse and desire, freedom and fervor, activity, quickness of feeling, quick thought, spontaneous action, are present now; but the power which serves as balance is coming in to moderate and control them.

Youth becomes conscious of intellect, is often proud of it, always perhaps strives to open and enlarge it, while its natural activity takes the place held before by the childish instinct, and develops its own qualities in its own ways. It looks upon nature with an eye modified by the interior change, and asks to know the facts, the order, and the laws of the system into which it has entered. Or, as in some of poetic aspirations,—and the poetic element exists in a degree within every soul,—it seeks to find in all things some inner source, to hear the voice which comes evermore in silence from the soul of nature, and to dwell in the world as in a paradise or temple, the image of heaven. Before the close of youth there are also some, haunted and driven by the vision or the shadow of a truth deeper and more lasting than science presents, than song and music celebrate, who cannot stay from searching into the intimate and eternal grounds of things; the mighty question of being, the mystery of absolute existence, begins to rise up before them with awful attraction. Men laugh at them, and tell them to put it by; they have no other answer to give than this: We cannot put it by. Willing or not willing, we must take what comes unasked.

So the childlike trust is vanishing for ever. A higher and holier may succeed; but this, this

unsuspicious and unbounded confidence cannot come back. Onward always it glides, onward, never backward, it will for ever glide, rolling its stream forward, this great river of thought; thus destined, not only to retain the volume which it has once acquired, but to receive and take with it in its course all the influences and elements gathered in the everlasting flow. The soul as soul, coming fresh from its fountain, is receptive of all which it meets; so soon as it evolves its power of conscious thought, so soon as the mind applies itself to observation, the boundless reception ceases. The mind proposes its question to Nature; but Nature goes on in her perpetual silence. The mind interrogates itself; but the answer returns many times dark as the words of old oracles. And withal it is learned, that fathers and mothers and teachers of schools are ignorant of some things. Nay, books themselves fail of making everything known. One bears, for instance, on the title-page a name no less than Natural Philosophy. Sure this will fill his love of wisdom and truth. Sure now the majestic doors, closed hitherto, will fly right open; he shall enter in, and, beneath the vast arches of the mystic temple, shall look up and around, and see face to face the reality which fills and hallows it. He pushes on with youthful earnestness, and learns sadly enough, and in

a little while, that the philosophy has nothing to report but the figure and parts, the combinations and proportions, and such like superficial things, of the stones or woods, the pillars, beams, and roof of the material fabric. We need not say, he found no God there; he did not find even life!

From such experiences some learn to hold in their intellectual aspirations; they have discovered the bounds of human reason, and will by no means pass over them. Such become men of science, practical men, men resolutely contenting themselves with facts, taking things as they are, putting pure ideas and ideal questions away from them, as either false or fruitless. Others find themselves incapable of this; they cannot chain down their aspirations; they cannot see the limits of reason, nay, reason appears to them illimitable; and before their young eyes, and in their yearning hearts, ideas, which seem divine, will shine out; they come to them so fair, so full of beauty, looking so like truth, the mind can scarce choose but stay them and ask their meaning and seek even to be guided by them, the still stars of a gusty night.

In either case the age of unquestioning belief has gone. The intellect is awake, and can never sleep more. There are dangers to which it is exposed, take what course it will. If it keeps to

the side of fact, then God and virtue and all true heroisms may be set aside; wholly sometimes, perhaps with the cold worldly sneer, if not even with boastful atheism; partially at other times, perhaps with a respectful deference, accepting and patronizing so much of religion and true nobleness as has been adopted into the fashion of society. If, on the contrary, the young mind pass over into the realm of speculation, there is a dream-land, as well as a firm earth; there are shadows, as there are realities; weary with his voyaging so long where it is only sea, sky, and desert air, he may step out gladly on what seems solid at last, and fall, of course, for it is only an illusion. Let him recover himself, and bear yet longer the lonely way; there is a shore beyond.

Besides distrust of man's wisdom, the youth gains a more bitter experience. From credulity to doubt, to scepticism, to unbelief, the thought may pass, through force of its own interior action. Oftener, perhaps, the passage is hastened, if not caused, by learning the falsehood of persons, of societies, or of churches. How terrible the first discovery that man may lie! Terrible it would be to remember; only who can remember what he learned so early? Perhaps the mother in her thoughtless love, perhaps the father in his restless hurry, may have planted this

first root of unbelief in the almost babe. Perhaps the teacher, to get rid of questions or to make a show of knowledge when conscious of ignorance, spoke the word which even the child saw to be false. Or other person, no matter who, gave the sad proof of how deceiving men are. And all these memories deposited in the heart and mused over, reappear in the criticisms and the scepticisms of youth, their effect doubled by another experience which comes too soon. When it is seen that falsehood reaches beyond the person into society; that fashion indeed is one outspread shadow, from which reality has escaped; that custom and even law ground themselves often on very falsehood,—on concession of truth and justice to some external interest;—when it is seen, moreover, that hypocrisy penetrates into the very sanctuary of God, and that the holiest names are prostituted to the basest uses, to the service of selfish ambition, of tyrannous pride, of rapacious envy, of brutal or demoniac lust; that not only may a man smile in the midst of villany, but even pray with devout face out of the heart nursing its sins and plotting mischief;—may God save him! The hideous phantom has bewildered his soul; the rising light is sunken into nether darkness; he wanders dizzy beneath the thickening night; when shall he find his morning and his Sabbath?

Let the young person, unseduced by passion, undeterred by ridicule, go forth, like the hero in ancient story, to solitude and serious thought and the calm choice of his course and his destiny. Let him never be ashamed, let him never cease to pray:—

Mighty and mysterious Being, who hast given to me this wonderful existence, and hast called me through so many influences to seek thee, to worship and serve thee, grant unto me wisdom and strength to know and obey thy voice. I am ignorant; teach me thy truth. I have erred many times; I am conscious of the sin of the world dwelling also within me; grant unto me forgiveness and repentance and amendment. I am full of doubt and uncertainty; open thou my heart to thy truth, and to sincere belief and trust. Preserve me from error; lead me into the way, the truth, the life.

O God! as I look forward into the long course stretching out before me, my heart is unto thee for thy guidance and thy strength. I feel myself now left alone of the flock, wandering I know not whither, often astray, feeble always; thou, great Shepherd, discover to me thy presence. Lead me through straight and even paths; nourish me from the heavenly pastures; give me to drink of the pure and living waters. I tremble in the dim foresight of what is com-



ing, now so near; prepare me for all, — for prosperity and for adversity, for temptation, for conflict, for victory.

When I look out upon the world, I see multitudes pursuing the promises of wealth, of pleasure, of power, obeying the voice of society, conforming to the customs and maxims which have gained prevalence around them. Is it thy spirit, O Lord, which calls me to hear another voice, and to pursue another promise, and to regulate my life by other principles? Teach me, Source of wisdom, and give me strength to walk where thou makest the way. Save me from the fear of reproach; enable me to bear sarcasm and slander, and every form of detraction; raise my heart, obedient and trustful, unto thee, for ever saying within me, Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon the earth whom I desire but thee. Guide thou me by thy counsel. Dispose me to seek first thy kingdom and thy righteousness, leaving to thy wisdom the kinds and degrees of outward good which I may need and thou canst give. Incline me to remember thee thus in the days of my youth; lead me thus in later years; and if I should become old and gray-headed, thou wilt not cast me off, but receive me.

So be it, O Lord!

## SECTION III.

## MATURITY.

THERE are no seams in life. There are not so much as threads woven into a web. Life is rather one unbroken growth and expansion, complete in the whole and in every part. The very expansion is not such as we see in the tree, wherein each winter the growth is stayed, and the next spring a new ring begins to lay itself over the trunk or branch of the last year; but the whole nature, all the elements and organs, continue growing together, simply developing at each successive period the quality befitting it, not to be dropped, not to be enclosed or covered by some new layer, but to enter as a vital element into the equally befitting form through which the whole is next to reveal itself, and thus on to the last. The receptive child opens into the questioning youth; instinct and trust rise into thought and doubt; the deep flame in both burns on into the dawn of a new day: what the new day brings, let us now proceed to inquire,—what qualities, what duties, what needs, what resources.

We have adopted the metaphor by which it is often described, though perhaps it might be more accurate to represent it as a maturing,

rather than a maturity. For, in the first place, maturity may be considered as always something ideal, not actual; an end approached, not an attainment reached; a promise to the hope, not a fruit in the hand. And, in the next place, like other stages of our being, it is a process rather than a state, a going forth of the nature over new courses, under other influences, with powers gathered through the whole past, and gathered anew with each progressive step. One thing more we may remark. As, in the orchard or the forest, the time is not long in which we see the bud swelling, breaking, flowering, the leaves then falling from the blossom to reveal the fruit or the nut, months following after in which the growth and ripening advance until the fall; so here, the man or the woman advancing to maturity, buds and blossoms fallen off, may be considered in effect to fill up far the longer part of life from its spring to its declining autumn. And as longer, so likewise the period of broader relations and more evident influence, — the period of concentrated thought, of sustained action, of established habit, of permanent character, — in which the person employs or wastes the gifts of nature and of education, exalts himself to the height of virtue, or goes away from it into winding and bewildering ways, and gives his soul, after a short old age, to the secret

destinies which wait for us at our next awakening.

1. The qualities of this period may be comprised, perhaps, in one word,—a certain balance, an equipoise, of the several elements and powers and organs. Both the body and the mind illustrate, each its own, the two their common, proportion and symmetry. The body reaches and retains its full stature; the various members develop their completeness and strength; the whole is prepared for action, for endurance, for rest; and whatever capacities each person possesses in his nature for the expression of nobleness or of beauty, according to the many forms of either, he now discovers in their highest degree. The mind has outgrown the season of thoughtless impulse and of unsuspecting belief; and, if educated—educated, be it understood, by personal culture, not by passive reception—in true harmony with nature, has also surmounted the perils of the intervening age: instinct still lives in intellect, belief still dwells in the heart of reason, the fervor of affection glows still, burning with unquenched flame, not amidst ashes and cinders, but in the soul which they quicken, not consume, and which they kindle into a pure, sunny, transparent sphere of light. Both body and soul, each so full of internal harmonies, are now

drawn perfectly together. Through the organs, now in their best estate, the commerce of the mind with outward nature imports wealth of beauty and affluence of joy; the body shares in the felicities which it helps bring in, and moves or rests with a steadier calmness, so serene the influence of richer thought and nobler feeling.

Artists tell us much of the quality they term repose, without which no work is perfect, and in which is given the perfection of all beauty. The picture may have splendid colors, a just outline, many details true and fitting; but it wants repose: the last demand is precisely this, all so complete as to present throughout the rest of an unbroken harmony. So with architecture; so with music; so with poetry; so, could we pass from finer arts to great deeds, with genuine heroism. The virtue which strives, and, after struggle and sometimes defeat, conquers at last, is indeed dear and worthy; but the heroism of which we are sure that it must prevail always, so full of inward warmth as to be cool in its outward glow, so penetrated by the vital power as to be calm in every movement, so deep in the feeling of infinite mystery as to shine brightly forth in the word and the deed, blending as in some purer bridal the forms of earth and the influences of the sky, — this holier grandeur, so rare, so transcendent, rises before us, and wins

our sympathy and homage as something celestial, nor less indeed than divine. Now, whatever there be which gives this sense, if we might so express it, of infinite ease, of the greatest effect from the most silent cause, comes within that order of qualities to which in the realm of art this name of repose is attached. In absoluteness, of course, no man attains it. But the character itself is the type of a mature humanity.

2. The man having reached this even balance of his powers, this repose, not of sloth, but of harmonious activity, holds a position demanding certain duties. His duties in their whole compass go through broad social relations and into high spiritual spheres. At present, however, we limit our consideration of them to his own person, or rather to the nature of which his person is expression and representative. So considered, his duties are compressed into one, perfect fidelity to this same beautiful nature. To the body, which false philosophies have taught us to despise, let him render the reverence due to the shrine of Divinity, the care due to the home of the soul, the culture necessary to prepare it for its own peculiar methods of occupation, and for the higher ministries by which it at once does the behests of the soul, and helps, not hinders, — helps as a living instrument, — the powers and operations of the soul. To the greater intellect-

ual nature, which men have so often embodied and imbruted, let him devote himself in obedient and entire service ; let him open his soul to all good influences, from without, from within ; let him cherish all pure and noble sentiments, all true and large thoughts, all generous purposes, all ideas of perfection, and all vigorous endeavors to give them form and substance in the realities of daily life. Let him dare, not only to be wise, but to grow wiser. Let him seek the higher daring, to be good, and to grow for ever in goodness. As he is not ashamed to confess the errors and ignorance of his childhood and his youth, so let him preserve his soul open to unlearn and abandon the errors and sins of later years ; counting sin committed the first shame, sin unrepented and unforsaken the only shame besides, and repentance, amendment, correction of error, the first glory which can be won by the soul once conscious of aught soiling its celestial purity. To make the something unmeasured and unbounded a reality within his experience, be this the end and the toil of his life.

3. These qualities and duties involve also depths of need. We see not unfrequently the tree which has been distorted in its course of growth, not ascending straight, full, round, symmetrical in form, the branches spreading naturally and with the beauty which strives even

against deformity, but through some adversity crooked near the root, the bark torn off, something split from the trunk, the whole form mutilated, branches and tree deformed as aught can be which Nature continues to nourish in her bosom. Such a loss as this the soul regrets, feeling how Nature is defrauded, and so much beauty marred. Man, too, may defraud the universe of a greater debt, himself of a higher joy, his very Father — with reverence we may pronounce it — of a child whom he thought worthy to send forth on holy ministries into his world. And man is intrusted to his own care and culture; to grow through will and work of his soul to straightness, fulness, symmetry, and true beauty, or to bend into the flexures and distortions of evil; to restore his spirit pure and noble, like the God who gave it, or to give it back undivine, bestial, demoniac. If for the cultivation of his fields, that they may yield rich harvests, and that they may give beauty to the earth which bears them, he needs equally strength and wisdom, — a strength which his arm wields, but which his arm could never create, — a wisdom which his mind receives, but which his mind could never produce; surely for the culture of his own being, for the growth and fruitfulness and beauty of a nature so rich in its boundless capacities, he cannot — if he knows aught of



himself, he never can — escape the feeling of a deeper and more vital need, — of a strength not less than the mightiest Power, of a wisdom not less than Wisdom itself. Severed from these secret energies, his being dwindles, is maimed, becomes distorted, dwarfish; what was made for heaven is poison even to earth. Penetrated, on the contrary, by these divine inspirations, his being enlarges, is wrought into growing harmony; the celestial element unfolds itself on earth, and unites itself evermore to the sphere of its inmost affinities, its infinite and everlasting attractions. Remember, O man, even in the flush and fulness of thy power, thou hast one perpetual need, one unfathomable want, one aspiration breathed of Him by whom alone it can be answered.

4. This assures us of the resources, the inexhaustible fountain of resources, whence we may derive — nothing less than all. The harmony, the even balance, the calm repose, such as the holy rest of an early autumn on hill and valley, through field and forest, over the earth, in the still air, in the stiller sky, which gathers the whole as within a mother's love, can come only from the spirit of which our spirits breathe anew, and which we accept with answering kindness and obedience. The lifelong task of building up a character such as the pattern

showed to us in the mount,—alive with the life which makes all nature living and beautiful,—a heroism of grander type than history or fable gives us,—is turned to joy and a triumph by the access of the Holy One: not, with the fabled son of earth, do we touch the ground and gather strength, but, with all true sons of God, we raise our souls into the pure sky, then life and light, then power and peace, come down on us in fresh baptisms, and the voice from heaven proclaims who our Father is. Our needs can never be greater than the supplies. Our needs are themselves unfathomable and boundless; but the fountain that fills them, O that is broader, deeper, higher, than we can think! Let us never go from the sight of that immortal sea. Let us never turn our ear from the voice which, over the waves or through the silence, soundeth evermore.

#### THE PRAYER OF MATURER AGE.

Almighty Father! I thank thee for the life which thou hast given; for the providence of thy love and wisdom, which hath watched over and blessed it; for the numberless gifts of thy benignity, renewed every morning, continued into every evening; for the influences of thy spirit, flowing through nature and breathed into the soul; for the disciplines and experiences of

the present time, and for the hope, reaching beyond this earth, of the eternal life. And as now thou hast surrounded me with so many blessings, so grant that I may receive them as trusts and obligations to duty; that I may not only return thee thanksgiving for what I enjoy, but render thee service in the exercise of my powers and the use of thy gifts.

As thou hast brought me to a state of freedom from the control and the guidance of others, so lead me, Father, with greater and constant earnestness to ask counsel of thee, to listen evermore to thy voice, and to offer unto thee sincere and entire obedience. Preserve me from pride, from wilfulness, from obstinacy, from prejudice, from narrow views and a bigoted temper; and keep my mind for ever open to the light which cometh from thee, to the spirit of humility, meekness, candor, freedom, and large and growing kindness. As thou hast extended the sphere of my relations to men, so help me, Lord, to fill it with those duties which I owe to them from thee, with those services by which I may minister to their good. As thou lovest all thy children, and art evermore giving of thyself for them, so do thou quicken me with the same love, and empower me to give myself in true sincerity for those whom thou hast made, holding nothing back, asking no return.

Help me, Father, to understand the character of this age of the world, its principles, its virtues, and its vices, its tendencies to good and to evil, and the claims which it presents to me for service. Preserve me from conformity to whatever in it is evil and false; transform me to the character of thy Christ and thy kingdom; enable me, through renewing of the mind, to dwell in communion with thee. Give me clear insight of the Truth, and ability to set it forth against the falsehoods which abound. Impart to me the inspirations of true Virtue, that I may not only prevail against evil in myself, but resist it in the world. With whatever comes of thee, grant that I may unite myself from the heart, and so help to persuade others to turn unto thee and live thy life. So, blessed of thee, help me to bless thy children. So, guided of thy wisdom, enable me to fulfil its holy ministries, now and for ever. Amen.

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#### SECTION IV.

##### OLD AGE.

THERE is nothing to fear in old age. It is the rich and beautiful completion of a life which has reached this period according to natural laws,

and is now waiting for the transition through which it goes into the unseen depths, not to perish, but to dwell in the form which God giveth it. Let none from youth onward dread the coming on of this serene and gentle autumn; let none over whom its declining hours come and go complain of the burdens which they bring; let them never yield to weariness in themselves, they surely bring not weariness to others.

But we would look at age somewhat more distinctly. Let us not forget our first principle, the good there is at the heart of all things, the essential good, as of all existence, so, likewise, of all the natural forms and processes which existence assumes, and through which it passes. This is first; so that to pronounce these later days of our lifetime evil, is to belie nature and to reproach the creative wisdom. Rather, as in the sunset which comes after some clear day, or in the fall which fulfils the promise of spring, and carries summer on to perfection, let us bless the sweet hour and the heavenly vision; let us welcome, and gladly own, what we cannot put aside, the law which assigns so gentle and fair a close to so busy and changeful a course, making the twilight and the autumn of human life such perfect correspondences to their types in the day and the year. Nor let us forget that other thought, the continuous unity of

our being. How wonderful! The child, all life and play, running, leaping, laughing, crying, this is our first sight. The old man, all slowness and rest, walking feebly, with staff to support him, or sitting hours without impulse to move, smiling gently, weeping, if he weeps, in silence, this is our last vision. Not likeness, we think, but contrast and mournful change. Truly the likeness is far deeper than the contrast. Changes there have indeed been in this mysterious course, — changes of condition, even of thought and feeling; but superficial rather than central, occasional rather than essential. It is the same being, the same unfolding nature, in both, and through the intermediate stages by which the one humanity grew from child, longing for the morrow, and man, waiting for the light which cometh at eventide. Such the unity of life; and so do these days of ours join themselves together in natural affinities.

To each there is, however, something peculiar. The hope of childhood passes into the remembrance of age. The activity of youth settles into the repose of years, to which rest is pleasure. The balanced powers of maturity have subsided into a harmony, not so much of powers as of experiences: the plans and enterprises of other days dwell within the memory for thought and speech; and a tranquil contempla-

tion becomes the habit of the soul. And among the numberless benignities of nature, there is also this: that, as from the point we have reached we turn our eye back over the past, a certain mysterious attraction draws us toward the whole; a beauty, calm like that of age itself, rests alike over the rugged passages and the smooth ways, over what had once been dark and dreary, and what had opened to us in brightness and promised us good cheer. This privilege is indeed common to youth and age, to hope and to memory. The young person from inexperience imagines the future will fulfil the promise of his heart, and looks forward into the long way which stretches before him as into some entrance to an Elysium; the aged, whose experience has taught him wisdom, sees in the same future, now become the past, a steady movement of Divine Love, not of course to bring again the toys and pleasures which the child asked, but to lead the spirit upward into new heavens and a new earth. So sometimes we go from a rough valley or a barren plain, over the hill-side, broken perhaps with rocks and cliffs, up to the high top, and look back on our way and around on the wide prospect; there are, for instance, the graceful curves of the Wachusett and the majestic outlines of the Monadnock, and everywhere a waving earth touching the smooth

sky ; within the large circuit the long valleys in which the Nashua sleeps, and other valleys with their running brooks, and meadows ; fields, with their growing harvests all around us ; the hardness gone, everything soft, gentle, the sternest feature that looks upon us seeming, as the eye meets it from the distant point, smooth, even radiant, with the transforming beauty of the light. Really, the soul of beauty lives through all these several forms ; only while we hurry on our way, careful but to finish our work or our journey, not to commune with Nature, we do not find the presence, and so pass along unconscious of where we are, until Nature herself forces the vision on us, and we begin to wonder at the wealth which must still be seen afar off, rather than welcomed as it lies at our very feet. One such height at least Nature reserves for us ; and age, beneath its evening sky, the west glowing with the golden set of sun, takes in the whole with larger view and with reverent heart.

So, too, we may note another aspect of this second and higher childhood. We have marked the simple belief of the child and the questioning distrust of the age which succeeds, as well as the later discrimination which the mind seeks to make between the true and the false, that doubt may be the process to knowledge, and belief may harmonize with reason. The soul,



advancing through these varied experiences, and learning wisdom from all, attains to a higher method of belief. It has found incredulity to be just as unwise as credulity, scepticism to have no more philosophy than superstition, universal suspicion as blind and deaf as implicit confidence. And within itself, through the disciplines by which it hath been taught, it has come to discover elements and powers, one with those of all other souls, so true, so vital, so great, that he can distrust them no sooner than he can distrust his own existence. In these he perceives a divineness and a life, which open to him, as if in the very deeps of his own consciousness, God and Immortality, the love of the Father, the divine sympathies of man, and the eternity of whatever is good and true. Thus all heaven is brought nearer than to the eyes, even into the heart and the daily deed.

Beautiful as age thus is in the idea, we know too well that the reality may be, what it sometimes is, far otherwise. That, through the perils which beset it, life may secure this last repose, I may perhaps offer a few suggestions.

The first goes back to earlier days. The ripe fruit is as the fruit has been in the growing from the bud to the maturity. A defect in the first setting, a bruise while it was very small, a cut, a rent, or any such thing, must of necessity

leave an effect which remains to the last; nothing can repair the hurt. And he who would gain to himself a blessed age, let him begin early. So soon as thought develops itself; so soon as the affections form themselves into moralities; so soon as the greatest sentiment of all, the feeling of a Divine Presence and an absolute law, reveals its majesty and its authority; and thence, as these and all elements of nature appear in new and larger combinations;—let him guard himself against error and vice and impiety, let him cherish, as his very life, truth, virtue, sincere and thorough piety. Let him ever dwell in love, assured that so God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

Then, as regards any perils considered as peculiar to the age which he has now reached. Perhaps there is no evil to which the old are thought to be more addicted than querulousness. Their weakness annoys them, it may be, their inability to do what they once did and would gladly do now; their consequent dependence on others; needs they cannot supply, which they are compelled to see filled up by services of others, sometimes accompanied by fears that these services are reluctant, if not insufficient. With minds thus disquieted, they may be less able to bear the petty inconveniences to which they are exposed; a new generation is spring-

ing up around them, little interested in the things which most interest them, engaged in pursuits from which they have been long withdrawn. The wildnesses even of children may disturb them, the noise, the hurry, the merriment, words of quick anger, short griefs, tumultuous joys, and all the thousand ways of ungovernable childhood. With these nearer annoyances others farther off may be mingled. There is some gross crime reported, or else some deed less gross, but of scarcely less influence in degrading the character, or in public affairs some abuse of confidence, some pecuniary fraud, some political servility, some outrage of power on the poor and defenceless,—some of the thousand evils which still continue to humble our estimate of man, and to draw forth the sorrows and the sympathies of sad and suffering souls. These are near and instant things. The haze which has been so long gathering over the past softens it all to the eye; the old man sees it only through the soothing light and soothing air; but distance has not yet come to spread enchantment over the here and the now; not unnatural, not unpardonable, the complaint which he sometimes makes over the growing degeneracy. Some of the saints and poets, not because they were so old, but because these dark forms oppressed their piety and their

vision, have left us passages not a few which at the best we may pronounce wailing satire, sometimes not less than sharp, biting reproach. But as sometimes in these sages, so in the old always, we must confess the querulousness wrong, we can hardly doubt the source of it falseness in the view which is taken of things. Comparing the present with the Divine idea in the soul, we may deplore the distance which separates them, the sin and the evil of man. But to nourish a repining temper by comparing the present with the past, — to make our fretfulness a holy thing by selfish complaints of the depravity of man, — this is certainly not one among the best of habits. Nor is this habit necessary to age, more than it is confined to age. There are some at every period of life, seeming to find their chief content in expressions of discontent; as there are more whose steps almost touch the line of the unfathomed darkness, but they walk in light, a sunny peace seems to encircle and lift them up; God to their eye fills the present, as he filled the past, and man still reveals to them the prophetic character of his immortal nature. As we continue to number with the past more and more years, to the very last, let us cherish this inner peace, which shall soothe every pain, and make darkness light; which shall draw us into sympathy

with childhood and sympathy with man ; which shall spread its own hues over the present, and teach us alike in the present and in the past to interpret the prophecies with which both are charged.

So when the transition comes, let us accept it calmly. Through how many depths covered over with shadows seeming death-like, we shall remember that we have already walked, either fearing no evil or protected against all evil, the light from heaven shining upon our path, the rod and the staff of the good Shepherd comforting and guiding us all the way ! If it be the dread and awful thing which men have pronounced it, to die, what have we to do with that, — we to whom death is abolished ? If indeed Death be the king of terrors, we know the Power which is greater ; the gates of the sepulchre have been thrown open, the Son of Man hath gone up to the Father ; life and immortality shine upon us from above. The Lord hath been our shield ; he will protect us still. The Lord is our sun ; his day shall encircle us for ever.

THE MEDITATION, MINGLED WITH THE PRAYER, OF  
AN AGED PERSON.

So long I have lived, and yet it seems but a day. Those old days, when I was a child, how near seem they now ! But they have gone.

And those have gone whom then I used to know. The men and women who were old when I was young, their shadowy images come back to me, their gray hairs, and their faded cheeks and their feeble steps; but a generation has grown and decayed since they passed away. My father and mother watched over me so tenderly, then it seemed so long. And they who were young when these ceased to be seen are now risen to manhood and womanhood. My brothers and sisters were glad and merry with me but a little while ago: the great mystery surrounds them now. The friends of my youth are with me no longer. And in my own home, O God, thou hast made me to feel so many times the presence of death. Thou hast widowed my heart. Thou hast taken whom thou didst give. I have outlived even of my own children; and now I am left almost alone.

How many the blessings which thou hast given, O Lord! I thank thee for the sacred memories which this hour gathers around me. I thank thee for the love and the teachings of my parents in my childhood; for the examples of just and devout men in my youth; for the early lessons of knowledge and religious wisdom and upright living; for the instructions of books, especially those Scriptures which proclaim thy being, and bear to us the words and the memo-

rials of thy Son. I thank thee for the blessings of the family, — for the holy relations which it hath established, for the dear affections which it hath awakened, and for the lives, even those which have left me, that grew within it. Surely, Lord, thy goodness and thy mercy have followed me all the days of my life. Help me to bless thee with my heart and my voice, when now I can do so little else.

Father! enable thy child to recall the memory of so many errors and sins. I have looked out upon the world, and it seemed to me lying in wickedness, dead in sin; and I have felt in my own heart the darkness and prostration and death. I have felt, and I now feel, that I share, how largely thou seest, in the sin of the world. Many times sin has prevailed over me, and I have gone astray from thee, my Father. I remember the waywardness of my childhood, the obstinacies and vanities of my youth, the errors and selfishness of my middle age, and how peevish and troublesome I make myself even now. O God, forgive me! Leave me not now I am old and hastening to the grave. And do thou, who lovest all which thou hast made, enable me continually to behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. Blessed be thou for the unspeakable gift! Let thy spirit, breathed of thee, filled with life, dwell in me,

making me free from the thralldom of sin and the darkness of death. Enable me to reckon myself dead unto sin, alive unto thee, in the presence and life of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Suffer me never to sorrow without hope, never to be weak without strength of thine, never to wander that I lose sight of thy glory. Now when my powers are all failing me, and in loneliness I am following the many who have gone before me, be thou the strength of my heart; be thou nearer unto me than ever; and open thou mine eyes that I may behold thy throne and the souls that call me thither. Thou hast been the guide of my youth; be thou the support of my age. Thou hast led me through toil and sorrow; uphold me in weakness, and turn this rest into the holiness of a Sabbath. I wait for thy voice, my God! Let it come when thou wilt, and enable me cheerfully to obey. While I am still on the earth, I pray to be preserved from repining, from unkindness, from censoriousness, from every sin; when I leave it, help me to bless my friends through meekness and trust and immortal hope. Be thou my God and my all; thou, my portion for ever. Amen.



PART II.

THE SOCIAL AFFECTIONS AND THE HEAV-  
ENLY LOVE.



## K I N D R E D .

WE have contemplated man as a person, deriving supply to his necessities, guidance in his ways, solace and hope in sorrow and in death, from the presence, the inspiration, and the peace of God. We have even remarked his relation to the kind of which each is one; so far only, however, as it bears upon his own person, his joys and sorrows, his weaknesses and his supports, his good and his evil. We may pass now to wider views. We come to contemplate man, not as lonely soul, great though this surely is, but as member of one living brotherhood; seeking, amidst the various forms which the kindly element assumes, to learn something of the duties, the wants, the resources, of which this larger sphere gives experience.

We may begin with the assertion, even if it bring some repetition, of the principle which pervades this division of our work. Man is not merely individual, much less exclusively selfish. We are told that the Scandinavians, those wild

children of the Northern forests, used to figure existence, universal existence, as a huge tree, the strong roots down in unfathomable depths, the broad trunk rising above and conveying upward the fluent life, thence the long and many branches growing and stretching out through the immensity. The image might be applied for other purposes; let it suggest at present this single thought, or rather fact,—the vital connection in which that one branch of the boundless tree, humanity, stands within itself to all which we may call its twigs and shoots and leaves, these living of that, and all living through the life which at once quickens them and makes them one. Man is indeed one. Ages gather and fulfil themselves, then dissolve into the successions of new eras; nations rise and grow and fall; tribes shoot forth of the central stock, to wither soon and decline; families spring up together, and are scattered like leaves; persons go through like processes of growth and decay; but the human race, the living humanity, survives. One and the same, this growth of the spirit outlives all change. Continually fresh life pushes off the decaying leaves; and if smaller branches decay and drop, we see no loss, for, before they have fallen, shoots all alive and green cover them up and renew the spring.

The leaf upon the branch, however, is not

equally near to all its neighbor leaves. Two or three or more may come out together, their stems meeting at the point from which they grow, united even in separation. And men—such the necessary, let us say, the benignant, limitations of nature—grow, some far apart, others nearer to each other, a few consciously meeting and joined together. The great life, excluding none, shoots out into severed unions. The union which seems most intimate, which is in reality vital and of true sanctity, reveals itself in the family. There are the husband and the wife; there are the children calling up from the depths parental and filial affections, developing at length the kindnesses of brothers and sisters. The child goes out into other circles; special affinities generate new connections; friendships are formed, relations extended; kindness reaches into widening circles; the larger heart interprets at length its sympathies with country, with church, therein with mankind. Let it be distinctly remarked, that through these successive processes the affections, drawn forth as by magnetic attractions, follow the power which leads them to fix upon the objects themselves; there they find their rest as their motive, instead of giving us mere reflections and modifications of self-love. Each loves, not himself in another, but the other, immediately, directly, purely.

The very thing which excites us to desire an object is that it contains in itself some element of attraction; our delight in the possession proceeds from a fitness in the nature to our spontaneous attachment. The fiction, such we may pronounce it without hesitation, the soulless fantasy, whether presented to the reason as a philosophical theory, or pressed on the conscience as a theological doctrine, that self-interest, or what we may call transformed self-love, is the ground or source of apparent benevolence, contradicts the first instincts of the soul and the clear voice of experience; it is a sheer and monstrous illusion; the heart gives it the lie; nothing but sophistry in logic or falsehood in religion can ever commend it to any man's conviction.

We are sent to the Scriptures for Divine words; let us search them, and if we search but deeply enough, we discover nothing less than the eternal life. We are sent to Nature, assured that all her births and harmonies reveal the creative wisdom; let us go humbly to her, and she gives answers greater than our questions; we find God in every form, in every movement. We are sent even to the human body, so curiously wrought, of such fine elements, such fit proportions, such perfect organs; sometimes to the mind itself, full of a grander power, of a

deeper beauty: we find in both the same holy presence. And after all, we may be kept back, we sometimes are, from another vision by theological doctrine and religious fear. Over our moral nature a Stygian darkness is supposed to spread; through this a demoniac influence is believed to have flowed, to flow still, to rage, to rush and whirl in endless confusion and ruin. If we must believe the most solemn religious lessons, God is shut out from his own shrine, the Devil reigns there and triumphs; all is a wide waste of desolating selfishness, a boundless chaos where that which seems light is illusion, where heat burns in darkness, and the deep heaves and tosses from infernal flame, no breath from above, no celestial voice, diffusing life, bidding the day rise, establishing order,—the soul one living mass of sin, of selfishness, of pollution! If it be so, then is wisdom effectually shut out at one entrance, and we must seek it wholly from some other sources. If it be so— But we will not follow the supposition to its consequences. Rather let us unlearn our consecrated errors. Let us go so far into our own nature, that we shall learn the Divinity there is within. God is as surely present to these native affections of the soul, as surely seen through them, as in the power of thought, in the symmetry of the body, in sky and earth, in the history

of the world, or the wonders of the Scriptures. It is the godlike nature of man's soul to love without selfishness; to love wholly and without limit, through the whole circle of objects which he has attained to see with clear vision. It is not more his nature to enjoy personal pleasure, to grieve at personal pain,—not more his nature to seek gain, to avoid or regret loss,—to desire kindness, to shrink from unkindness, toward himself,—than it is his nature to love whatever appears before the mind as lovely throughout the whole realm of existence. Even more than this we might say, perhaps, of the sweet affections, living, freely growing, in the heart of man; more may not be necessary, however, to introduce the series of thoughts which we now pursue. This nature, penetrated by such affections of living kindred, involves the destiny correspondent to itself. It makes inevitable our communion with others in their good and evil. It gives us gladness when others are glad; it compels us to suffer with those whom we see suffer. It elevates us by the virtues of others, and depresses us by their vices. A lonely woman cannot follow the march of armies, drawn by these divine attractions, but we feel ourselves with her, ennobled by her spirit of self-sacrifice; nor can the man of unknown name fall bleeding in a distant Crimea, but our hearts sorrow with him, and we



rejoice if eyes of love look on him in his pain, and faithful care either bring him back to life or soothe his passing spirit with heavenly consolations. The sympathy has no other limits than human kindred; so that through this other order of experiences we must needs receive a discipline of joy and of sorrow correspondent to its natural aspirations, and to the love which in-breathes and answers them. Here, if we may recur again to the ancient psalm, here are other pastures doubly green, in which the Shepherd maketh us to lie down; other waters of a deeper stillness, beside which he leadeth us; paths more even and true, through which he guides our steps. And here, as we walk through the valley, whose shadow of death falls on us from the darkness which gathers over those we dearest love, we ask with new earnestness for strength to overcome fear, to meet evil; only the feeling that the Lord is with us, can hold us up now. Only his rod and his staff can comfort us in such sorrow. Through this gloom, let us trust still that he can only bless, and will bring joy at the last. Others also, whomsoever we love, let us ask in assurance that goodness and mercy may follow them all the days of their lives; that they too may dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE FAMILY.

FIRST in this heaven-like cycle! Home, source, channel, issue, of all those principles and powers which bless earth and promise immortality! Inmost of the circles which spread out widening, and, amidst change, still enduring, into societies, nations, churches, and whatever forms humanity may receive! The true type of manhood, from the rudeness of those times when each family was, as it were, an entire commonwealth, the father at once priest and chief, to the culture and perfection of those ages, seen as yet only by hope, when the human race shall become one family, wherein again the priest shall be king, the king priest, and all, men, women, children, shall serve as royal priests within the sanctuary wherein as first the blessed Christ shall lead us all unto his Father and our Father, unto his God and our God! To complete the great idea, Type on earth of communion in heaven! So sacred, so comprehensive, so full of significance, the Family.

## SECTION I.

## HUSBAND AND WIFE.

PERHAPS no single thing gives us a more just appreciation of the stage to which the human mind has arrived, or at which it stands, than the prevalent conception of marriage, or, of what is almost the same thing, the distinction of man and woman. Go back to ancient history, particularly that with which, because contained in the Bible, we are most familiar. There were great men and great women; there were heroes of both; queens as royal as kings; women who sung prophetic strains, as well as men; and to both the majestic name of prophet is given in common. But how seldom, if ever, do we find any suggestion of aught that is spiritual and holy in the man as man, in the woman as woman, that is, in the essential and everlasting elements of sex. No difference appears, other than in the greater or less endowments of human powers or of divine gifts. With little consciousness afterward how full of meaning, what a regenerative truth, it was uttering, the Christian Church pronounced marriage a sacrament. Grand ideas, also, both in the Old Testament and in the New, were wrapped up in the perpetual illustration of God's relations to man by

the union and the offices of marriage; but they have remained commonly wrapped up, not unfolded, not laid open, not understood. Even since the Protestant Reformation, and in a writer of such generous views as Taylor, man and woman have been pronounced the same in soul, differing only in body; whence it would necessarily follow, that, as the distinction of sex is only superficial, animal, temporary, so marriage at the best is but the addition to friendship of an outward, earthly, perishable connection. And whether put into words or only supposed, perhaps without consideration, this view seems evidently predominant almost throughout all literature. The consequence is natural. Instead of approaching man and woman as sacred and perpetual symbols of two celestial ideas, — as immortal forms, representing throughout divine elements whose union completes both, and completes humanity, — we have drawn near to each with the feeling that the humanity is the same in both, and, as that alone is of essential worth and endurance, so whatever there is in the one unlike what there is in the other, is a trifle and a fugitive thing. Other than as an intimate friendship, marriage has thus nothing noble in it. All the intercourse of the sexes, grounded thus on mere external diversities, becomes, of course, external, low, mean.

A higher view, we may trust, is developing itself. It implies, even if it has failed in any case distinctly to set forth, the origin of those attractions which draw the husband and the wife together in the Supreme Spirit. The Love which God is, in the processes of its creations, insouls, if we may so speak, and embodies itself in the two forms of man and of woman. Each is alike related to the image of God; each is alike quickened by the spirit of life; each, living soul; each, partaking of the light which shines into every soul; each, destined to an everlasting communion with the Lord. But as the very air and water contain differing elements, equally products of the creative agency; and every whole in nature and life may be reduced, through certain processes, to constituent powers; so man, to be perfect, as a species, combines the powers and elements which we call manhood and womanhood. Through the soul, wherever soul exists, through the body, wherever body is formed, through the types of both, wherever nature reveals such types, the elemental distinction appears. It is thought by some — why should it not commend itself to all? why not be accepted, when every expression of man or woman indicates it, and all analogies of nature are in harmony with it? — it is thought, that, through each particle of the diviner breath

within us, through every power and faculty and action, this grand distinction is diffused. Certainly the whole form and texture and complexion, the sound and intonations of the voice, all outward expressions of what is within us, point to some interior and original separation, — to natures compact of diversified elements, or at least combinations, and yet approaching, by reason of these diversities, toward indissoluble union. Sex thus rises from the realm of nature into the realm of spirit, or rather penetrates both, giving throughout the universe twofold forms, spiritual attractions, harmonies produced by diversities. And thus withal the idea of sex drops all its trivial associations; it is transfigured, and becomes radiant; it is internal, high, full of worth, of significance, — may we not add, of divineness? As outward nature overflows to us with holiness, so soon as we see God in all; so does this grand order, prophesied in nature, fulfilled in man, overflow with a deeper holiness, so soon as we perceive in it the creative love parting off and reunited in this beautiful image of the Infinite Unity.

I may have failed to state as I would this central law of humanity. I know, likewise, that, even in any the best statement we could make, we might expose ourselves, not barely to the charge of obscurity, but of shadowy,

reasonless mysticism; some possibly might turn off the whole with a scoff, as if it were sheer nonsense,—in one of the cant words of the day, moonshine. To the scoff we might return no answer but silence. To the thoughtful objection we might offer some reply like this. We confess to the charge of partial vagueness and obscurity, call it mysticism or anything else. But there are two sources of obscurity; the one in the mind of the person, the other in the nature of the thought. Now the thought itself, the great principle on which we wish to build up the whole idea of life, seems to us perfectly clear, the daylight itself not clearer. But the mind of the age, we feel, we feel in our own experience of dimness, as well as in our observation of it around us, is obscured. The sacredness of sex, its spiritual origin, its interpenetration of our whole being, thence the profound reality of marriage, how dimly do we see these things! We seem but just emerging from that abyss of sensualism which has engulfed the whole subject. How should we see with the murky vapors hanging everywhere about us? Let us follow the glimpses of light we have; perhaps after a while we may gain a sunnier height, a purer vision.

Our foundation, then, is laid firm in the divine depth of marriage. Let that stand as the

first basis in practical relations of a social Christianity, the first practical condition of a regenerate humanity. From that ascends, rising by successive steps to fill the prophetic idea, the whole structure of human duty, the simple elements of household love spreading, expanding, entering evermore into new combinations, united at last in the complete symmetry of universal communion. We can do little but look reverently toward the holy structure; it is too high, too large for us to take in the whole; only such simple views as these may be taken as we pass along.

A topic meets us, however, at the very entrance, which there is some difficulty in approaching. It looks strange, this common fact in human experience, — that men are wont to treat lightly, sometimes even with ridicule, quite often with merriment, the most solemn questions and interests of life. Thus, when the mind is first aroused to the earnest feeling of religious truth and duty; when from thoughtlessness it begins to reveal the consciousness of sin or the hope of immortality; when it drops its earlier levity for the weight of divine impressions, and, ceasing longer to amuse itself as a child of earth with the showy surfaces of things, seeks to enter more deeply within and to live in harmony with its celestial origin, — how few



who do not confess it wise and right! Yet how many, joining in the same confession, greet, if we may call it greeting, the transition with laughter and mirth, if not with sarcasm and apparent contempt! Just so with the anticipations of marriage. Taylor has said with most emphatic tone, but with little, if any, exaggeration: "They that enter into the state of marriage cast a die of the greatest contingency, and yet of the greatest interest in the world, next to the last throw for eternity." Yet, when two young persons are brought before us in the preparations for a union of such unspeakable moment, that strange tendency to bring mirth and seriousness together, to turn the gravest thing to lightness, comes out with its laughter and its jests, —

"Quips and cranks, and wanton wiles,  
Nods and becks, and wreathed smiles."

The only quarrel which we need have with this spirit, which thus pours festive wine into the hallowed chalice, is when it not only makes us merry with the gift, but drives thought away; nay, makes men so drunken that they never see truly, nor think wisely, nor look at things but on their gay, tricksy side. Be sure, the young man and maiden, as their hearts begin to turn toward each other, have commenced a process of the most solemn religious interest. Not that

they should burden themselves with intricate and unanswerable questions of conscience; not that they should perplex themselves with morbid doubts and anxieties; not that they should enter into conflict with that Nature which is always wiser and stronger than any of her children; but they should anticipate marriage religiously and spiritually, because marriage is itself essentially religious and spiritual. Now they do say, not unfrequently, — not sneering men of the world, or cynic philosophers, or hard satirists only, or silly sentimentalists, but loving, gentle, calm, and sober men and women, — that convenience, or wealth, or some external distinction, is sometimes the primary inducement to marriage. A time or an occasion has been reached, making it suitable or expedient to assume this relation; and, coolly as one would purchase any piece of furniture, he goes out to find and bring in his human portion of the establishment. This method is not limited to circles of fashion and wealth. There remains the tradition of an eminent preacher of the last century, that, in addressing the woman whom he sought nominally for a wife, he thanked God he felt nothing of the foolish sentiment which young people called love. It makes one glad to hear of the same tradition, that the woman rejected him. Ignorant man! knowest thou not that

the only motive which can justify marriage is that which demands it? — that any connection bearing the holy name, not produced and cemented by this sweet influence, is anything but what it is called? — that man or woman would do better to live in a wilderness and in forlorn poverty a thousand years, than to marry for any reason whatever other than this same reviled love? This is God's own inspiration into the soul. This is one with the inmost life. This is the attraction of hearts. This is the fountain of true union. This is the parent of mutual sympathy, of helpful service, of kindness both in doing and in bearing the work of life. This allays passion, and forgives offences, and strives evermore to grow into closer union with the object by which it is called forth. This purifies the heart, makes the affections chaste, and lifts the whole relation into a sphere akin to heaven. Let one rule dwell with the young in all their anticipations, to form no engagement, to bind themselves in no compact, on any other ground, from any other inducement, than the consciousness of a pure and sincere love. Marriage is promise and symbol of this only; take care that the fact correspond with the idea. Offer no love, until love impels the proposal; accept no proposal, until love impels the acceptance. For no conceivable reason except this, —

convenience, reputation, interest, usefulness, religious service, or anything, — let man or woman think for an instant of abandoning the single life.

With such solemnity, perhaps it may seem almost dogmatism, a topic often spoken of so lightly, passed over many times as too delicate for discussion, has been introduced. It has come in our way; very cheerfully I have met it. Its import is infinite, not in hyperbole, but really, literally, infinite; let there be no disposition to avoid it, no apology, though readiness to give a reason, for accepting it as that which it is, and urging it as we can.

When through his own inspirations of mutual love the Father has united these betrothed souls, then, retaining the spirit which drew them together, and more than retaining, cherishing, re-quickening it through the disciplines of the family and of all life, letting it grow as the little, tender bird grows under the brooding wings of the mother, as the gentle child grows from daily nurture, as every pure and childlike thing grows through its own nature penetrated by befitting influences, let them renew the sacredness of marriage every year and every day. Taylor spoke unworthily both of himself and of his subject, when he said, that, after the first joys of the bridal state are past, the remaining portion of it is a dull progress. Love is never

dull; true marriage is always young; nowhere more than here is the saying of one of our ancient poets fulfilled, the old world neweth every day. Where love never existed, or has died out, if this be possible, the course must indeed be dull, heavy, wearisome. There will be no variety of joys, for there will be none of the true joys of marriage at all. There will be change of sorrows, for the state itself will become sorrowful soon, and the fluctuations through which it is borne onward, as from wave to wave, will continually bring their peculiarities of sorrow. But where love exists, it increases by what it gives; it receives beauty through joy which makes its surface radiant, through sorrow which deepens and fills its sources; and as the husband and the wife might seem to have exhausted a love from which every hour is drawing its portion, they feel it hourly welling up, alive and full of sweetness, from the fount of God. To keep for ever open this inward communication from the Divine Source is the first privilege of both, as it is the great condition of domestic peace.

Words have often been defined as signs of thought. Sometimes it is added, that as signs they are arbitrary and concerted; as if virtually and indeed actually, though not in any distinct consciousness, men of their own judgment and

will devised certain forms of articulation to express certain thoughts, and thenceforth employed them for mutual communication and reception of those same thoughts. How far with regard to particular sounds and phrases this theory may be true, how far false, is a question not belonging to the current of our present meditations. One thing, however, is to be said. Speech, as such, has a higher origin than any judgment or any compact of men. Words as words, not as mere concerted signals of the mind, flow forth stream-like from the soul,—from the soul quickened of the universal spirit. We do not indeed speak articulately so soon as we breathe; but breath is not one whit a more natural process than articulate speech. The voice comes out with the earliest breathings in significant cries. Gradually the mind opens, the will comes to control whatever of organ, of power, of action, lies under its domain; that mind, that will, all the instruments and operations of both, equally natural and spontaneous. By the natural exercise of these organic elements and powers, the child learns what the sounds heard are meant to express, and learns to repeat the same sounds with the same meaning. The meaning of those words is twofold; they convey thought, and they convey the more subtile principle of vital feeling. Never a word

spoken but it bears in it these two mental constituents, over and above all its physical relations. The old Grecian poet, in language now become trite, continually speaks of winged words. But what is it which wings sustain and bear? The whole bird surely, not some part or parts of the bird; not the body only, with its fine and delicate structure, the limbs, the muscles, the fibres, the thousandfold tissues, but the living element which pervades the whole, — the life which beats in the little heart, and runs through every organ, and grows into every feather, and empowers the wings to beat the air, and to support the fair creature rising and soaring into the skies. So with bird-like words; the wings which bear them away from the tongue to the ear, through the waving air, live with the life of those words, themselves miraculously framed of mysterious thoughts and feelings all instinct with life. Winged words! The man is not the body, — this of itself is corpse; not mere thought, — there is thought no longer than there is thinking soul; not mere feeling, — this dies if unfed from within. The man, truly such, is that of us which outlives all changes, and maintains for ever the consciousness of one living person. Now these words, wings of the soul, bear up, and carry whither the secret spirit will, the real man, the whole of that in us which

liveth for ever. The Hebrew proverb remains, How forcible are right words! We may speak more broadly, How charged are words with vital power!

What of all this? it may be asked. Much, the answer is ready. Souls united in love are continually giving and receiving these wonderful ministries. Souls pass and repass on the wings of words. There is not a little romance about the stories of carrier doves, of messenger birds, flying far over the land and over the sea to bear letters from friends or lovers separated far from each other. The true carrier bird is always with us, always coming and going, always bearing the mysterious communication. If one were sending his carrier bird to some distant place, he would be sure to let go tokens of love, kind thoughts, tender memories, cheering hopes, everything to give signs of affection and to win them back with the return. Let the same care be continually cherished in the simple intercourse of husband and wife, that the word of each go surcharged with thoughtful love, with loving thought. Let each beware of the first word bearing aught of unkindness.

The soul loves to fly forth winged with words. But we stop not here. Besides expressing thought instinct with feeling, words are also seminal, germinant, productive. Like seeds,



said sometimes to float through the air until they rest at length on some earth ready with the soil to receive them and to nourish their growth, words go floating off from us, and when we perhaps think them lost in the desert of air, they have yet found a sure abode; they have fallen into some soul which keeps them and restores them in a fresh form and with renewed vitality. The growth and the fruit are like the seed, fair if that is fair, healthful if that is healthful, and evil if that is evil, poisonous if that is seed of a poison-tree. And when the connection is so near and intimate as that of marriage, how constant and prolific must of necessity be the course of such an influence! How must the gentleness of the one sow gentleness in the other; the word sweeter than honey, flowing from the heart through the lips, reappear in the heart giving back through the lips the word of answering sweetness, making both twice blessed! | As, on the contrary, the fretful word grows into the fretful answer; the angry word brings back the retort of anger; and hate or coldness cannot utter itself, but the characters are reflected as from a mirror behind which they seem to have graven their own image; not a shadow, but the reality.

Nor is this all. The word bears out the living soul. The word reproduces its own kindred

in the soul to which it is borne. The word has yet another power. It reacts upon the speaker. The eloquent man not only kindles other men by his speech; there is none whom his words inflame so much as himself. Each living word he speaks summons quick thought, glowing emotion, burning utterances, in his own soul; and he who entrances others is himself entranced, not only before he speaks, but while he speaks and by his speech. The principle is universal. Let it be applied in the case before us. Let it be remembered how many the words, passing incessantly between the husband and the wife, each of which, according to its quality and degree, returns to the soul which gave it forth as a reproductive power. The emotion which it expresses it requickens. The temper which it utters it stirs within. The thought which it signifies it clears or clouds, and fixes into enduring form. In addition to which, once spoken, it asks to be defended. Rather, we might say, suppose it to have been kindly and true, the reason is contained in the utterance; but if unkind and false, pride quarrels with conscience, and, unwilling to stand condemned by the severer judge, the man stills remorse by palliations and apologies, so weakening the sentiment of right and strengthening the force of wrong in his heart. To speak gentle words is

to cherish the spirit of gentleness; to speak ungentle words, is to grow ungentle in the deed, to double the evil by the apologies which sustain and renew it. So mighty the tongue! So many the elements and methods of evil and good in the mystery of a word!

The application need scarcely be suggested. Day by day, night after night, in larger societies or in the smaller circles of the family, often when only the two are together, for months and years, this great energy is at work to complete or to disturb their joy. They meet when pleasure is over them, when pain afflicts them; when they gain or lose the prizes which they seek; when others are kind, when others are unkind; glad with secret joy, sad with strange grief; from youth to age amidst all vicissitudes; everywhere love prompts blessed words, blessed to the speaker and to the hearer; griefs, annoyances, angers, jealousies, mixing consciously or unconsciously with them, making the words sometimes a bitterness and a curse. How great the care with which the heart and the life should be guarded against both the inlet and the issue of aught which shall disturb the divine harmony! How fervent the prayer in which the soul, rising to God, shall come back full of love and overflowing with benignity!

The word is one form of the deed. But there

are other methods of intercourse than those which pass through the organs of speech. All which has been said of speech might be repeated of deed. This is also sign, natural, spontaneous sign, of thought. This is also sign of feeling, of feeling -instinct with life. This is the very life projecting itself through the soul into the activities of the body. And deeds are as really winged to bear the spirit with them, as are words. Men have long been accustomed to ascribe to them even a louder voice. Louder it may be, nor that only, but perhaps more penetrating, more effective as expressions of soul, as reproductive energies, as instruments of mutual weal or woe. There are unconscious actions, almost involuntary; so far at least unconseious and involuntary, that their sources and their processes lose themselves from the memory, and the very form which they take to the observer is unknown to the doer. Such are motions and changes of the eye, weeping, smiling, compressions of the lips, the curl of contempt, the flush of anger, the knitting of the brows, the clenching or opening of the hand, the tone, if we may so call it, of the posture or the gait, and other kindred, often delicate and almost impereceptible movements of the various organs, so numerous and significant, of the human body. There are then, palpable enough, the conscious and

voluntary actions, those to which we give the name, and through which the common affairs of life and of business are conducted. When indeed we speak of actions, we commonly limit the term to these, and consider them, moreover, in their relations to certain defined ends, rather as another and larger form of speech from soul to soul.

Some persons abound in praise of action as opposed to speculation, and as distinguished from speech. Their praise is not wholly unjust, when it recognizes the largeness of that it commends. Not seldom, however, we have reason to fear, the real intent of the word in such cases is limited to the movement or series of movements commenced, prosecuted, shaped, to the accomplishment of outward results. The prayer, with or without voice, secret or social, may seem an indolent waste of life and time; only the hand put to labor for some purpose as perceptible as the labor which procures it, is counted worthy action. Higher far let us deem of action. It is soul bodying itself forth. It is love through thought vivifying the powers of motion. It is spirit coming down from its secret recesses to control nature. Or, in default of soul fulfilling itself, it is appetite seeking its own; of love, it is selfishness clasping all it can reach; of spirit, it is passion or pride raging and swelling in

its despotism. And in either case, for good or for evil, it is the meaning, the deep heart, which gives its chief worth or unworthiness to the deed. Men pronounce it a great deed, when some generous man gives his thousands to some private charity or some public endowment. How much greater the deed of the poor woman who gives herself, all unknown, to the support of a poorer neighbor! To the lame man in the ancient story, which was really the greater deed, that which threw down to him pieces of silver or gold, or that, and it was only a word, which diffused strength through his limbs, and in the name of Jesus sent him forth to walk and leap and praise God? O, this is the virtue of every deed, the heavenly love which it bears, as the angelic form its radiance of beauty, to the souls of men, asking after all, not the deed, but the doer; not the gift, but the giver; not the work wrought, but the spirit working.

As for what has been spoken of as scarce voluntary deed, the only rule perhaps is analogous to what is sometimes employed in treatment of the body by the physician. The disease, he believes, arises from some derangement of the system, quite remote, it may seem, from the symptom; so he lets the symptom alone, and endeavors to bring health into the system. Does husband or wife learn of any unconscious deed which

produces pain or discord? Let the disturbed expression be removed by the culture of an inward, permanent benignity, which shall know how to light up the countenance and to make every movement a harmony. Or in the distinctly conscious action, does either thwart the feelings of the other? If possible, let such action cease, and the souls through all channels run on together. In one word, let the love, out of which marriage grows, nourish itself by continual exercise, and by those sacrifices of self to service in which alone the heavenly life is lived.

PRAYER OF THE HUSBAND AND WIFE.

O GOD our Father! We thank thee for those inspirations of thy love which thou hast breathed into the human soul; for that image of thyself in which thou makest thy children on earth; for the light within us to perceive thy presence, and the power in which, as we see thee, so we love thee, and in loving thee grow into pure and sweet affection one to another. We thank thee, whose providence, ever watching over and blessing us, prepared our hearts for this union, and so guided our steps that we should meet as now in this holiest relation. Father, enable us to fulfil the duties to which it calls us.

We confess unto thee, great God, how weak

we are in ourselves, how powerless to do the work of life, how prone to selfishness and sin. We beseech thee to grant us strength, the strength of thy spirit, the power of thy Christ, wherein we can do all things; and enable us thus to repress every selfish propensity, every wilful purpose, every unkind feeling, every thought and word and deed of anger and impatience, and to cherish perfect love, mutual submission, constant kindness, to think pure thoughts, to speak gentle words, to do helpful and generous deeds. Raise our minds to the contemplation of thy beloved Son, that, seeing his divine beauty, we may be drawn near unto him, and changed into his image, and empowered to bring every thought into obedience to Christ, into harmony with his spirit and his immortal life.

Thou, who hast touched our hearts with the attraction which thus draws and unites us together, inspire us also, we beseech thee, with worthy thoughts of this our indissoluble connection. Leave us never to rest in its outward conveniences and pleasures, never to seek from it only personal and perishable enjoyments. Show to us how divine is marriage in its origin, how spiritual in its nature, how deep and lasting in its influences. Grant that ours may be true marriage, our souls one in thee, growing through



communion in daily life more and more one, and flowing forth evermore in purer and holy affections. Unto thee, the eternal fountain, enable us to come without ceasing, that we may drink living waters; from thee, the eternal life, grant that we may constantly receive the celestial manna; so shall we be refreshed and strengthened to do thy will, to revive and gladden and ennoble each other, to go on our way rejoicing in the Lord and in the power of his might. And through those secret and heavenly influences, we beseech thee, O God our Father, to render all our intercourse and our hearts so pure, that we shall be fitted to dwell together in the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Amen.

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## SECTION II.

### PARENTAGE.

THAT is a great hour when first the heart feels the parental love. A childhood has passed, sure of affection from the father and the mother; a youth, widening the relations of kindness, but never ceasing to go back to the home which is still its centre and its joy; time has evolved new principles of attraction, and, in the experience

of a growing and ripening love, has imparted higher and more sacred delight, a certainty before unknown of purest and truest bliss. But through the whole, one mystery lies still folded up, waiting to be revealed. The hour has come at length; as from the rock, all unconscious of what it contained, when the rod of Moses touched it, waters gushed forth, alive, refreshing, filling every thirst; so, touched by the new wonder of power, the heart opens and gives out untold and immortal streams. No drop is ever lost in the sand; the fountain is never sealed again; the channel cannot dry up. The first-born may be the last-born, or others may succeed to the portion of love; but it is neither contracted by solitariness in its object, nor exhausted or wasted by number. One may receive the whole; but it remains a whole for every other. It is type of the Infinite Love, complete in every part, larger than the universe, boundless in the atom, an undiminished infinite to the least thing, an unextended and unexhausted infinite to the largest.

But here we may not stop. The Heavenly Love draws us up to the secret height of those affections which it fills and moves, as the unseen power for ever fills and moves the air and the tides. But neither air nor tide may have long times of repose; if they did, how soon would the

body drink poison with the breath, and upland and shore be laden with pestilence! Sometimes there is such an autumn day as this. Only look out from the window: the tree-tops and leaves are still in the morning light, or else move so quietly that they bespeak the gentleness of the power which goes over them: this pasture, back of the house, with its splendor of flowers blooming amidst decay; this hill, arising from the brook, with the mossed rocks, the reddish-brown berry-bushes, and the changing vine-leaves, and the long reach of forest stretching along from west to east, still green, but not as in spring or summer;—all seem to-day resting as if Nature kept her Sabbath. The eye chanced to look out yesterday, or a day or two ago, and the sky was thick with clouds; long folds stretching off from the north away toward the south, one under another, looking themselves dusky and hard, and white only where they parted and grew thin, nowhere bright and golden; and then, as out into a waving sea, the wind sent a cloud-ship detached from the larger mass, to sail away for a while, then dissolve into vanishing vapor. Cloud and wind may come again to-morrow. So sweet this repose, we might ask to have it stay. But if it stayed, there would be no repose long. Just so throughout nature, the world, the family. Parentage opens, as it were, a vision of

heaven. The soul rests in new peace and serene joy. But the vision goes from us, if we linger long to hold it fast; the joy will not stop at our bidding; the peace is disturbed; the Sabbath becomes profane.

What is there fairer\* on this earth, a truer type of heaven, than the meeting of these three souls? The mother, rejoicing in the fulfilment of the long hope; the father, whose heart cannot stray from the frail bud, or from the mother dearer now than ever; the babe, wailing and sleeping all unconscious of the bliss which it has brought, as unconscious of the destiny which appointed its coming, which will fulfil in it some mysterious purpose, — but a purpose all of love. So they live imparadised. But it may not be so long. The gift is a trust. The new life opens a new realm of duty. The blessing involves a care. God sends never such a soul, but with the solemn charge that the parents so receive it, so cherish it, so help its growth, so guard it from error and sin, protect it by such prayers and discipline, that it may return, a lovelier, childlike form, to the Everlasting Father. O parent, while thine heaven seems only sunshine and pure sky, darken not the glory by reasonless fears and unthankful solitudes: yet remember still, nor ever forget, the work which is given thee to do, this greatest, holiest work.

After all, it is the blessed privilege of this, as of every connection, that the love which is its parent is not less the teacher of the duties, the inspirer of the motives and principles, which it involves. Books may help define our thoughts and methods; older persons may suggest the lessons of their experience; our own remembrances of childhood may discover what in our parents did us good, what harm; observation and reflection of human nature may correct our errors, and furnish increased light to our steps. We may despise none of these, nor any source of instruction. But let it be repeated, love itself, the essence and element of parentage, is the true prophet. Not more readily through the wonderful processes of nature is the nutriment prepared for the child, and conducted to the fountains from which he receives it, — not more naturally through this and the sweet air of heaven, and all other ministries by which he is served, does the child grow larger, stronger, into consciousness and activity, — than, through the no less wonderful processes of spirit, love prepares and gives itself out to nourish the immortal life, and, whether we know it or know it not, flows from the bosom of the mother and the father to fill and strengthen and guide the opening soul. It is indeed celestial love which, overflowing through all the mother's affection, and all the

father's softened heart, encircles the little one with caresses and with kisses, with words so tender and loving they strive to be more tender, more loving, with cares and — who can tell all? through long days and nights which would be weary but love holds the eyes waking, and keeps the hands strong, and makes hardship a welcome thing. The soul of the parent is reproduced in the child; the soul of the parent re-enters the child with each word, each deed, wherein the soul passes winged into the sphere in which the child dwells. And so without our wisdom or foresight the Universal Spirit has provided the most essential and constant elements and methods of education; empowering the parent through personal virtue to communicate unconsciously the secret attractions of good.

This influx of God, which so penetrates through parentage into the heart of the child, is a universal presence. The child has come, a living person, into permanent relations to nature, to man, to God; endowed with all those susceptibilities and powers out of which his good or his evil may proceed. Pleasure and pain are among the first of his experiences, as they will be of his midst and last. Gain and loss will soon excite, exalting or depressing him. Kindness and unkindness will be perceived and felt, nor ever more lose their influence over him.

Gladness will spring into consciousness; sadness will cast its shadow, long and deep, on his spirit. And either premature death will close his course, or it will pass through the successive seasons which fill out our brief year. But the Divine influx pervades also both himself and all these circumstances and states and courses of his being. Besides cherishing in purity and holiness the principle of parentage, the earliest and perhaps greatest power, the father and mother, while yet the child is helpless in himself, must seek to introduce him into such conditions, personal, natural, social, as shall at once avert whatever is really evil, and invite whatever is truly good. And after this season of entire dependence begins to pass away, the body and the soul empowered to maintain a personal and chosen activity, the heart and the eye and the hand of the parent are still constantly near, with affection, with watchfulness, with help. Even when the child has become man or woman, and is now centre to some new circle, the aspiration and the endeavor for his good survive in the two souls from which first they flowed. And through these several stages, it is our great question, how shall the principle become effect?

“That is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural.” We might add, also, the first

is not even intellectual, moral, consciously religious. The natural, the body with its tissues of organs, appetites, capacities, that is the first product of the maternal nature. To that the earliest care of the hands is given, that it may be strong, healthful, fitted for the uses to which it is designed. But there is foresight of these uses; to make it fit for these is the earliest prayer of the heart. When in other ages a Hercules or an Achilles, or even the man who could bear away the highest prizes from Olympic or other games, was the type of heroism or of human felicity, then no greater hope could attract the parent than to see the son attain to qualities and distinctions kindred with those of such honored men. The whole nurture, diet, exercise, everything, must conspire to increase the muscular power, to complete an athletic frame. And for the mind, the culture which it receives is correspondent; there must be hardness, a mingled caution and intensity, resolute determination to bear pain, fixed thought, indomitable will. Or if the endeavor had been to form a Homeric man, the spirit which should translate heroism into song, which should sound out the angers and griefs and feats of an Achilles, in words and verse renewing them to the silent ear, or another Pindar, to raise the games into associations with divine deeds, the men



who wore the crowns with gods and heroes, then to an athletic training must be added the heroic culture of the intellect, the very soul of those wild, fierce men only turned from the strife of battle to the rendering of it in music. Themistocles was strangely out in his answer to one who asked him whether he would rather be Achilles or Homer. Thou, said he, wouldst thou be the conqueror in the Olympic games, or the herald who proclaims the conquerors? No: the old bard shared the antique heroism; and he who sung the songs of the Iliad, or the Pindaric Odes, let him but have equal bodily strength and equal opportunity, could never have been other than the hero himself. This, however, by the way. The thought before us is simple. Natural development must be sought for an end greater than health and strength; and, as anciently that end would be the formation of a character such as befitted the heroic ages, after the model of what were then ancient men, warriors, and warlike bards, so now natural development, education of the body, the earliest work of parentage, must be sought for such an end, and in harmony with such ideas, as correspond to the epoch in which we live, and the type of humanity which it seeks. The very body must be formed now to serve, not the warring passion, not the spirit represented either by

the god of war or the god of the heroic lyre, but the soul of peace, the spirit in which Jesus lived and of which his true Church is body; the heroism which strives through gentleness to save mankind from evil, and whose herald voice is the announcement of the victory won by conquering love. How shall such culture be secured? This is the great question. Doubtless the very constitution of the body, the muscular development, the intense capacity for endurance, the whole natural formation of Napoleon, not only enabled him to be that he was, but actually predisposed him to his course. Every faculty, whether of body or of mind, is not a faculty alone, but an appetite, and may become a controlling passion. Suppose the physical organization to be as thoroughly pre-adjusted to the Christian life as we have known it to the life of the hero or the poet, so that when the mind opens on the objects which invite pursuit, all the natural tendencies should turn immediately to this greater course, who can foretell or even foresee the issue? Nothing good of those antique types is lost; the second man is all of the first man, only exalted, glorified; the Lord from heaven is also living soul, but imbued with quickening spirit; and as the spiritual man is the perfection of each person, so let education from the first contemplate this, as

at once model and prophet of the life which it seeks to draw forth from within, out upon a future stage of consciousness and of action.

As thus the body must have its type less in the wolf than in the lamb, less in the vulture or the raven than in the dove, so let the endeavor be to develop a harmony between the mental power and culture, on the one side, and, on the other, the spirit and the kingdom of God, of which, let the world say what it may, the lamb and the dove have become consecrated symbols. If the body has affinities to the one and the other of these characters, and may be formed into symmetry with the gentleness of Christ as well as the fierceness of the savage or the pride of chivalry, still clearer is it that the mind is more deeply penetrated by such affinities, by sympathies, which may be called prophetic, with both. The consequence follows of necessity; whatever power there is in parentage should be put forth to guard the mind from the access of prejudices, of errors, of falsehoods, by which it may be misled and deluded,—to help open the inlets through which the Truth may come in and find a ready acceptance. Nor only as regards the speculative view. The fountain even of knowledge, certainly of action and character, lies in the depths of the affections. So let the care be to preserve this holy fountain; to protect the soul

from selfish and brutal appetencies, to uncover it to the entrance and efflux of unselfish and celestial influences. Nor is this process to be pursued so much in the way of determining the child to our own opinions, our own forms of life, conduct, worship, as in preparing him to think and act for himself, empowering him, so far as we can, to live wisely and nobly from free thought and free choice. Certainly care should be taken that in his soul religion and virtue should be connected with gentler images than of fetters and mental imprisonment; that irreligion and vice should lie wholly severed and apart from freedom and enlarged vision.

Here comes up a question of much theoretic difficulty, though perhaps in practice circumstances commonly answer it for us, before we have opportunity to resolve it for ourselves: How may children be protected from the vitiating influences of society or of ill-disposed persons about them? The question can hardly be answered by any definite and inflexible rule. If we may go back to the old fable again: Achilles, that he might become invulnerable, was plunged by his mother in the river Styx; but she still held him by her hand, and took care to draw him out. Now, if there had been no danger that ever he would meet any peril,—if there had been no such thing as war, no soldier to

fight, no sword to wield, no spear to thrust, no arrow to shoot,—perhaps she might have left him without this protection, trusting that in quietude he might live his life out and meet no fatal chance. So, were there no vice in the circles which are destined to surround life, no peril to truth and virtue which there is any reason to look for, the case would be changed. As it is, the warfare is sure. The trial is inevitable. Away from father and from mother, amidst strange persons, it may be, and new scenes, soon—there is no help for it—the young soul must stand, if it stand, or fall, as sometimes, alas! it falls, before the evil influences of the world. Then the soul must be exposed, either unprepared by earlier trial, or else with all of strength which the parent can impart. Let then the Stygian waters come over him early as he is able to bear them; only hold him up and draw him out: it is better, prepared and invulnerable, to meet any, the strongest foe, than, unprepared and susceptible to every wound, to encounter even the weakest. Strength is won of hardship; but let not the hardship be more severe than can be borne. Strength grows with exposure; but let not the exposure drain out the life itself. Virtue grows of exercise, often in almost desperate conflict; but there is seldom a virtue so protected that all is invulnerable. The heel

even of the old hero failed of the touch from the Stygian waters. Perhaps we can answer the question only thus indefinitely: Never too much exposure; never too much precaution. Never exposure beyond strength; never precaution hindering growth and strength. So much for the more conscious and direct action of the parent upon the child.

Finally, let the parent, as far as possible, put his own interferences aside, his plans, his opinions, his will, his entire self, and so leave the room free for the full flow of the divine currents. Perhaps Herbert saw but dimly the depth of his own word; and, when he suggested how many the servants are that wait on Man, more than he perceives or notes, he might have reference rather to ministers of outward health and comfort than to angels of inner life and power. And yet it is not more true that in every path we tread down that which befriends us, restoring its glow to the pale cheek, its strength to the feeble frame, through those healing virtues which it contains and gives forth, than that in every path we walk, and every place we enter, and every sight we see, and everything we hear or touch, we are encircled by powers friendly to the spirit. If, with this same poet, we contemplate man as one world, with another attendant and waiting on him, let us also confess how secret and holy

the attendance, what a service of heavenly love overflowing both worlds is for ever near and intimate. God's angels come to us in the benignities of our own nature, and in the harmonies of the outward creation. The earth ministers to us of her own firmness and riches and maternal affluence. Her changes and her products, which serve our bodily needs, come also from heaven, bringing influences from God to the soul. The air which sustains our breath and gives vigor to the limbs, penetrates to the heart, and inspires a more secret and quickening life. The water renews itself in the mind, there opening purer fountains, sending out holier streams, creating other seas, spreading out larger oceans. The sky mirrors a new heaven within; and, through sun and stars and moon and the whole round, not only gives us a language to interpret the inner mystery, but shines also within to lay it open to the asking eye. Everything comes alive with the Supreme Goodness, to lift our souls to heaven. Thus is God for ever working, out of us and in us, to strengthen the will, to empower and hallow the deed, that so we may will and work with him, for the highest issue. So, beyond every effort of his own, let the parent accept assurance of this greater operation; and, when the heart is cheered by hope or saddened by fear, let him acknowledge whence all comes; trusting

that the virtue which he has failed to impart may yet grow from a holier spirit, that the sins which he has been unable to hinder may be subdued by a mightier presence, and that, in every sin escaped, in every virtue revealed, there comes a fresh inspiration enabling him longer to labor and to pray. Many hopes may be disappointed, much sorrow may press him down; but there is not one he loves with fervent heart, but there is another who loves as he cannot; there is a celestial flame, — and it circulates through the universe, — which can burn up all that is evil, which can quicken all that is good; there is a heart at the centre, whose strong pulsations beat through the whole circle, whose warm attractions draw for ever into it all that lives. Hinder never the angels of God; let them fulfil all their ministries. His will shall be done, as in heaven, so likewise on earth.

#### THE PRAYER OF PARENTS.

Almighty God! we thank thee that in our earlier years thou didst teach us what thou art, how near to our hearts, how worthy of our reverence and our trust, of our obedience and our service, through the image of thyself in our parents, and the affection which thou gavest us to them. Now that thou hast removed us away from them, uniting us through other attractions



of the infinite love, we thank thee for the new intimations of thine unseen presence. We bless thee, that in these hours thou revealest thyself in our own deepest experience; teaching us how thou art Father, by those feelings of the father's and mother's love in our own souls. Help us, so taught, to love thee with purer and truer heart, henceforth, for ever.

In this experience of parental affection, we feel, O God, anew the imperfections of our past lives. We confess our thoughtlessness and disobedience, our unkind feelings, our ungentle words, our wrong-doings, in childhood and youth, when our parents so loved us and sought our good. Father, forgive us! We remember and confess our disobedience unto thee; thy parental kindness is infinite and eternal: how often have we forgotten thee, and neglected thy law, and gone astray from thee! Father, draw us once for all unto thee.

Help us now to love each other with deeper and more heavenly affection. We bless thee for the immortal life which hath already gladdened our hearts and awakened our hopes and our prayers: grant that it may form a new bond in our everlasting communion, and that we may grow better in ourselves, nearer to each other in common objects of sympathy, so knit into more living and powerful unity of heart.

Prepare us also to fulfil the great duties of parents; to train up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; to set before them examples of piety, of virtue, of faith, hope, charity; to teach them, as they are able to receive, the truths of thy being, thy perfection, thy providence, thy law and government; to protect them from the perils of the world, and persuade them to pursue whatever is true, holy, divine. We are ignorant; teach us, that we may instruct and guide them. We are weak; strengthen us, that we may be able to hold them up, and draw them to thee. We are sinful; make us holy, that we may show to them the celestial beauty, and win them to seek it. Reveal in us thine image so fully, so clearly, that in us they shall perceive thy presence, and, through the filial love which we call forth in their hearts, they shall be conducted to the higher attractions, raising them into obedience unto thee and perpetual communion with thee. Save our children, O Father, from the evil and the death of sin; consecrate them by the spirit of holiness to thy service; make them and us children of thy family in heaven and on earth. Amen.

## SECTION III.

## THE FILIAL AFFECTION.

How broad may be the meaning of our sage poet, I shall not attempt to say:—

“Who drinks of Cupid’s nectar cup  
Loveth downward, and not up.”

This, however, does stand written in the eternal decrees, that not only the lower forms of affection draw us downward, even below ourselves, but the higher powers of love, even to the celestial Cupid, always descend. Let it not be thought impious here to look up and contemplate the one Soul of all. God is love. He loves no self, no greatness, no glory, nothing which seems immense to us. But his love comes down out of himself to the finite, the changing, the temporary. It streams in beauty down through the world. It grows in the tiny flowers, and in the trees just as little to the Infinite. It lives in water, air, and earth, swimming, flying, walking, making the creatures happy as they can be. It comes to youth and maiden, to husband and wife, infolding them in its mystic embrace. It renews itself in each new life which it produces, over which it pours the spirit that shall draw it upward. And as each order of existence rises toward God, it embosoms so much the more of

this descending love; and while the greater inspiration fills the soul with a peace of God, it can no longer rest, but seeks everywhere something to bless, some other self, some lower nature, to invite and make the sharer of what it has itself received. Thus the genuine man loves all which grows and lives, delighting to make happy whatever can be happy, to make beautiful whatever is susceptible of beauty. And so too those who are truly greatest, as they most love, so do they go down in their love to any whom they can serve; it is not nobility, dominion, principedom, power, wealth, they seek, but the weal of all men indeed, chiefly of those whose need is deepest. They would dignify the ignoble, give power to the feeble, exalt the depressed, and supply the poor with necessary things, and with means of helping themselves. None of these can return a love equal to that which has wrought them this good. The charity which descends to bless, is always stronger than the gratitude which ascends to thank.

On this universal law rests the fact so often remarked, that the love of children to their parents is always less than of parents to their children. Sometimes children may be charged with unkindness, they love so poorly those who have done everything for them. And there may be thankless children; now and then such a

monster appears, as in digging the earth or exploring a remote land they have chanced occasionally to turn up the skeleton of some horrid beast or some uncouth man. But the cases are rare. Children, like parents, love in a descending line. They have drunken in from those who went before them a soul of kindness which in very nature lives in a future, rather than a past, and seeks to find objects for itself, instead of resting content with those which are present for its earliest attraction. Parentage is to plant the germ of itself in the child, not to draw the child back toward the parent; to impart the powers and affections which, instead of assuming exclusively, or even chiefly, the forms of filial gratitude, shall reappear in tenderness and care and cheerful service rendered to those who shall succeed themselves in the same weakness and dependence.

Not as if filial affection were either wanting or slight. It is neither. Though not the strongest, it is strong. It is strong in itself, strong in the powers by which it is confirmed and increased. Through the complete dependence in which the infant child hangs upon the mother, and through the softened temper with which he is watched over by the father, with little else of human interference to excite the earliest thought, the first emotions of the soul are drawn forth by

their presence. Long before any experience which remains fixed in the memory, the latent spirit is roused and opened by the mother's unceasing attention and the father's earnest watchfulness. On them first the love, which is essence of the soul, becomes fixed, with all its unfolding susceptibilities to gratitude, to trust, and to obedience. As from their hearts and hands come the unstinted gifts of protection and culture, so from their lips fall first and oftenest the words of kindness, of warning, of reproof, of instruction; so that, it may be, for years, everything which has interest to the mind or the body, to the want or the attainment, to the past or the present or the future, to memory or to hope, is associated, it would be scarcely extravagant to say, identified, with their images. Morning, noon, night, the child comes to them in dependence and goes from them refreshed and gladdened; Sundays bring to the whole house their hallowed influences, and together they meet in worship; the daily prayer increases the impression; all which the parent says or does to call forth the devout tenderness of the young soul, goes to deepen the sentiment of reverent love; and the native instinct, thus reinforced by so many and so sacred associations, developed before memory is strong enough to hold it fast, exists in full consciousness with the earliest re-

membrances; and, when dependence and weakness cease, outlives them, enduring in its own elements and in the dearness and sacredness of the associations which it gathers around it.

Herein lies, not so much the obligation, as the incentive to the prominent duty of children, obedience. Perhaps this is considered too much under the character of a hard service, a compelled submission, and by consequence a servile and weary task. Really, this is the natural growth and expression of filial affection. Such affection, naturally developed, cherished as a living principle in the heart, turns of itself to obedience in the deed. What the one is in the soul, the other is in the body; or rather we might say, perhaps, obedience is the harmony of both, the childlike heart inspiring the childlike conduct. Just as the person who loves aught of melody, hears and delights to hear sweet sounds, the winds among the trees, the running brooks, the birds singing by night or day, the many instruments of music, the eloquent voice, or the voices of singing men and singing women; just so does the loving child obey and delight to obey, that is, inwardly and truly to hear, the words of his parents. If the words come in with his own inclinations, he has of course entire readiness to carry them out into fulfilment. But if they chance, as sometimes they will, to

find him predisposed to something else, then conflict must arise in his mind; a conflict measured by the strength of the opposing tendencies. Be it distinctly remembered, that the native instinct is to obedience, not to disobedience; and the reluctance in each case to fulfil, it may seem, the word of the parent, is not that, but reluctance to surrender some other thing sought by an equally natural instinct. Obedience carried into act, something sought is lost; obedience withheld, something sought is gained; the contest is not with the parent, it is between two natural instincts of the child. Could we now address ourselves to the mind in this state, what should we say? Should we chide the child as wilful, as obstinate, as undutiful, as devoid of natural affection? Suppose in one of a multitude of instances the charge were true, yet commonly it is wholly false or extremely exaggerated. What then? Something in most cases like this: "You want this thing which pleases you so well, we know fully, and do not blame you for wanting it. You desire no less to obey your father and your mother; they know better than you what is well in your enjoyment of it, and they think it necessary for you to give it up. How much better, how much truer to your own souls and your highest feelings, to sacrifice your desire to their judgment!" The child is called from play



to work, from out-door mirth and company to in-door seclusion, and perhaps toil. Let him accept the same principle, surrendering the lower impulse to the higher. He may not know it yet, but he will know it afterward, that so doing he is learning the great lesson of life, — sacrifice of pleasure to reason, of personal inclination to universal duty. To the child, the parent stands as the embodied reason, the form of truth and virtue, the highest type of the Supreme Being. Thus, in obedience to such a power, there is nothing servile, no mere subjection to imperious will, no stooping of soul below itself; but the very reverse, freedom of feeling and deed, acceptance of wisdom and virtue for will and passion, and therein a real elevation of the whole being.

So we may never set the old commandment aside as obsolete. And indeed there is something which may be worth remark, not only in the position of the commandment as given in our Hebrew Scriptures, but in the fact that a similar position is assigned to it in other ancient books. God alone, the one Supreme Being and Saviour, is to be worshipped, in reverence, in truth, according to the institutions of his own benignity and wisdom. Next the precept succeeds, Honor thy father and thy mother. Just so Pythagoras, introducing first the religious conceptions of his age and country, summons

us to honor the immortal gods, to reverence the oath; to reverence next illustrious heroes and the divine powers beneath the earth; and it is then added, Honor thy parents. Thus Isocrates, writing to a young friend instructions of the highest morality which his age knew, sets before him as the first duty to worship the divine powers, and adhere to the oath, observing the established laws, and passes next to this advice: "Be such in relation to parents as you would pray that your children might be in relation to yourself." This coincidence, not only in the thought, but in the position of the thought, appears significant. As in the Divine Voice from the mountain, so likewise in the human aspiration for wisdom, there seems an intimation that, between the spiritual sphere and the lower earthly circles, parents, as it were, intervene, to represent before the feeble and yet growing mind the superior and unseen powers, thus leading childhood through the image of the parent to perceive and obey the Father of all.

This service performed, and the season of filial dependence passed, the filial affections are by no means exhausted. The time has come, indeed, when the son or daughter, no longer child, must think, feel, choose, act, from personal judgment and under personal responsibility, departing often, it may be, from the thought, feeling, choice, pre-

script, of the parent. But the time never comes, when the opinions, the sentiments, the purposes, the maxims, of the parent should be regarded otherwise than with deference and sympathy. Should the man or woman be compelled by the power, whose supremacy may never be questioned, by the clearest insight of reason, the most solemn voice of conscience, the living word of the Eternal, to withdraw from aught held most sacred by those souls, so venerable and so dear, whose lives have been renewed in us, still the separation should be, never in selfishness, or pride, or disrespect, but with reverent kindness, with gentle humility, with the spirit of a childlike obedience, listening only to what each must confess a voice greater than human. And whether such reverential dissent should ever pass, or parent and child unite through life in consent to the same great principles of truth and duty, let the unquestioning dependence and trust of childhood be transformed into grateful memories and personal sympathies, and a cheerful readiness to serve for ever the lovers and guardians of our infancy. While they grow old, and we feel ourselves advancing into strength, let us consecrate the first fruits to them, and grudge nothing of our later harvest. Be it our joy still to give them joy; to strengthen the sympathies which draw us to them; to substitute, for the loosen-

ing ties of outward connection, those spiritual attractions which neither distance, nor lapse of time, nor entrance on new relations, shall be able to weaken; which, indeed, a devout communion, once formed, will confirm and deepen and perpetuate. It becomes us to follow them in such a spirit through all changes to the last; to minister as we can to their wants, until their wants shall cease; to soothe their sorrows, to gladden their hopes, to comfort their hours of bereavement, and, when all is over, to hold their names, and all which was of worth in their characters, still fresh in undecaying remembrance. As highest of all, let it be our care to reproduce and perfect in ourselves every virtue which makes them dearest to our hearts.

#### THE PRAYER OF A SON OR DAUGHTER.

Thou Unseen Being, who hast set before us in our parents the image of thy character and of the providence wherewith in love and wisdom thou watchest over thy children and blessest them, enable me to perceive thy goodness in my father and mother, and in them to obey thee. For their long and weary care over me, let my heart be filled with gratitude; and, as I remember their services and their instructions, enable me to receive the same spirit of devoted service, and to cherish the principles and the virtues

which they have commended to me. Save me from all neglect of their persons and their wishes, from all disobedience to their words, from all obstinacy, carelessness, and disrespect. Enable me to look up unto them with reverence, to anticipate their desires and their needs, to listen earnestly, not only to their commands, but to their counsels and suggestions, to surrender my own inclinations cheerfully to their judgment, and to fulfil all my duties carefully and religiously.

Supreme Father, I confess unto thee, with manifold other sins against thee, this also, that, many times and in many instances, I have failed of rendering to my father and mother the honor due to them both for their own virtues and for the sacredness of their relation to thee and to their children. Thou hast seen all in me which is wilful, and selfish, and unkind, from my first years unto this hour. I beseech thee to forgive every sin of the past, and to grant unto me the fulness of that spirit in which I shall be strong to repel evil in the future and to obey my parents in the Lord. Help me so to live, that I shall gladden the hearts of those who have loved me most tenderly, and that I shall do service, however humbly, to those who watched over my infancy, and guided me in childhood, and taught me in youth, and whose care hath never ceased.

And, O merciful God, accept my fervent desires on their behalf; that, as they advance in age, thy presence may be felt with them, directing their course and upholding their steps; that, as their children succeed them, their eyes may be cheered by seeing each pursuing the right and heavenly way; and that, as they look to heaven and as they look to the earth, they may rejoice in what they have and in what they hope. Spare them long to bless their children; and fulfil at last all their desires in the fulness of thy peace. Amen.

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#### SECTION IV.

##### BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

THE first-born is solitary. He may retain no recollection when the solitude ceased. Save as there might be occasional meetings with others of equal or near age, he has no opportunity to give out the natural feelings toward what may be called associates and those of younger life. Thus in its origin the order of love is inverted; it goes upward, not downward. It is awakened by eyes which look down upon it, not by forms more frail — for such there are not then — than its own. But it is waiting to assume the natural order, and to go downward.

A new birth is thus joy to other than parents. Never in a well-ordered household are there too many brothers and sisters. The younger are always welcomed with natural delight by the elder. Hitherto the elder has received all, and given nothing. How glad the little heart to meet something which its love is able to serve! See how, with an appearance of distrust at first, of shyness, the thing is so strange, the elder brother or sister approaches toward the unconscious and sleeping or wailing babe. The strangeness soon goes off, the shyness, the distrust; and in a little while there is nothing so much sought. He looks into the eyes and the face; he takes up the tender hand; he wants to lift and carry the light burden. He invites it to play, tries to feed it from his hands, and has a thousand sweet and artful ways to convey the new gladness to the soul unaware of its worth. Parents remember, when others have forgotten, how the first question in the morning is for the sight of this new joy; how through the day the child, scarcely more than pigmy yet, seeks already to help the smaller and the feebler, and perhaps remembers it with the last thought losing itself in sleep. Love now begins to reveal its own nature. It descends. The kindness which had quickened it becomes in it now the fountain of quickening life. It had received; it imparts:

it had been blessed ; it blesses : it had passed through parental ministries ; it proceeds now through heart and hand to serve the helpless, to supply want, to do it hardly knows what, — just to gush forth and flow whither it will.

Some may look at all such things as trifling. Might one presume here to speak his thought, or, if the word be held as more fit, his fancy ? Many centuries ago, among men who seemed to have known scarce anything even of those ancient people, the Hebrews, it is reported that one exclaimed :

“ Surely there is spirit in man,  
And the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding.”

So, likewise, among the Proverbs ascribed to the wise king of Israel, we have this one :

“ The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord,  
Which searcheth all the chambers of the body.”

Later still, under very different forms of culture, a Roman poet — he too sharing not a little of the Epicurean scepticism which his age had applied to earlier forms of religious belief — contrasts the mind with the body, describing the secret power within us as above the earth, particle of divine air or breath. Later again, how grand the thought spoken to the Athenians by the Christian Apostle : “ In God we live and move and have our being.” These are only some of the many words left to us, in which



devout souls have spoken their common feeling of God so near to us, so present, so intimate, living in our own natures. Why should we have such shrinking from a belief so full of piety and of joy? Sure there is not so little as a cloud but the Power has gathered it from the waters, and spread it above us, and bears it in the wind, or pours it down in rain. Sure the line of blue sky, lying there between clouds above it and the forest below it, is his; he gives its hue, he covers and unveils it, he holds it fixed through the lapse of ages. The western clouds shone last evening with rays of his setting sun, and this morning reveals the same Universal Beauty, which hath embosomed all from the beginning, which will encircle all for ever. And if we cannot think a flower opens without God, that one leaf of it or petal or tint is untouched of his spirit, why hesitate to confess as near a presence, as deep an influence, in the human flower?—in the very bud from its first growth until it spreads its leaves out to the day and drops them as the evening comes on? And if understanding, if mind, if reason, is indeed a divine inspiration, shall we deem less of affection, of soul, of lowly serving love? God is the one, absolutely speaking, the only Father. It is his presence, his spirit, his inspiration, in man and woman, which unites their souls in the true

marriage; which flows through them as parental affection, and reproduces itself in their children, first awakened by the superior love with which they bless the little ones; then, as the children grow, rising into the divine order in each elder heart, giving out all it can to the younger, but everywhere, in all its degrees, in all its movements, nothing less than a living influence of the present Father. If there are who shrink from it as arrogance to claim such nearness of humanity to God, let them ask themselves what it is to exclude God from such nearness to humanity. If there are who fear the thought may lead to the merging of God in man or nature, let them retain their caution, and add to it the further care that they bring not death over the soul by severing it from Him who is its only life.

Here, then, we stand. The infant brother and sister are penetrated by this love, not from themselves, not from any low, selfish impulse, but from the Father. It is his life, so much of it as they can receive and impart; his influence, so much of it as they can take in and give out; his inspiration, so much of it as they can draw to their hearts and breathe anew. What though they perceive in it nothing but the conscious kindness? Neither do they perceive in their bodies anything but the manifestations of them to their experience; but they will learn some

time that their bodies infold laws, powers, principles, which far transcend the circle of sensation, and rise at their height and source to God. Not less their simple affections. Reverence the brother and the sister's love! Its fountain also is in heaven. That caressing word, that caressing touch, all those tones and deeds of kindness, bespeak the sweet affection; and more, they reveal the source; and this affection is itself flower from a divine root, its cup filled with dews and fragrance of heaven.

No lower than this implies may we deem of the love which descends through parent to child, in which the child overflows toward the younger brother or sister, by which he helps awaken the same spirit in others, and to prepare each for those who may succeed, until the whole round of domestic kindness is complete.

That the harmony proceeding from this fraternal principle may be secured, perhaps nothing is of greater effect than reverence, on the part of elders, of the sentiment in itself and its origin. As a pleasant aspect of human life, man may look on it with satisfaction, even with delight. As a means of household comfort, they may cherish it with care and assiduity. As a discipline of character, they may likewise assign to it a high place, and so endeavor to turn the family circle into a moral school or gymnasium.

Only when above all these views, true though they may be, we rise to the higher, and contemplate the Divine inspiration of which love is flower, do we reach that state of religious reverence for it which insures a full and genuine culture. The Roman satirist said that the reverence due to children is of the highest degree. But he seemed, after all, but imperfectly to apprehend his own meaning. It is not enough to keep them from sights and sounds of evil, to beware of corrupting them by vicious words or deeds: we want the reverence which grounds itself on the perception of the divineness that dwells within them. Men walk with reverence on holy ground, in solemn forests, within vast and ancient cathedrals, sometimes even in a common and familiar church: something divine seems there. Remember how sacred childhood is, no ground so holy, no temple so reverend: God is within. Thus let all cherish, as other affections, so this principle of brotherhood, this union no less than divine, in which brother and sister dwell amidst influences of heaven. Far off from the hallowed scene, let profaneness, irreverence, unkindness, pass and disappear.

Nor suffer anything to interfere with the natural development of these affections. Sometimes the elder child is told that he is supplanted by the younger in the love and care

of the parents ; a saying as false in philosophy as it is ungenerous in effect. As if spirit, like nature, were divisible into atoms. As if soul, like body, might be severed into pieces. As if love were other than one whole to each successive object. The child grows of himself fast enough out of the need and the desire of special attention, so loses nothing he would keep in the services which pass to a younger. But he does not outgrow the need or the desire of love and the tokens of love ; and each new child may but endear the older, and help us to better expressions of kindness to all. This is enough ; and so, without obstruction, without thought of rivalry, free from all jealousies and secret envying, they grow up together, more and more into one. It is the joy of parents, it is the blessedness of children ; it is type of human fellowship, effluence of God, symbol of heaven.

Let us not overlook the peculiar felicity given us in this guidance of the Lord, through the union of sexes in the family. In external arrangements and internal education, in the economies of the household, in mutual intercourse, in the culture of the sensibilities and of the intellectual powers, in the formation of the manners and the development of the moral and religious character, and generally throughout the whole circle of duties devolving upon both, the presence

and co-operation of the brother with the sister, of the sister with the brother, are to be marked as divine charities to the family and to mankind. The fraternal element is one in each, it may be; but one in variety; the same, and yet other, so fitted to modify, when it may be wanted, the processes by which the one advances to manliness, the other to pure and gentle womanhood. Another illustration of the good wherein all things appear in their creation! Good, not only in their several natures, but in their diversities and the secret magnetisms by which they are drawn toward harmony in their common centre.

Finally, whatever the course in which the Great Shepherd leads us, whether he conduct brothers and sisters near each other on the earth, or sever them, opening divided paths, and scattering them in youth or age, let them learn that affection belongs, not to place, but to state; that love is of God, not of men, of heaven, not of earth; and that the sole connection which is permanent holds them together, not by bonds, but by attractions, and those attractions unseen, spiritual, divine. As of children in relation to parents, so let it be said of children in relation to each other, whatever their changes, however wide their separations, through new connections succeeding older connections, and seeming to

push them off into apparent distance and partial forgetfulness, still let them hold fast to the sacred attachments and associations of their earlier homes. By the presence of parental affection, while it continues to bless them; by the holy memories which follow it after it has passed into another realm of being; by the common hopes, disappointed or fulfilled, which grew up around the dear old fireside; by the thousand endearments of other days, and even by the little angers and strifes which time has now softened into gentler recollections; by the prayers which they heard together, or were taught to offer; by the hours of pain and sickness which shaded the brightness of other days, recalled now for solace rather than sorrow; by those darker hours when hope and fear met together over some fair flower fading daily away, until both rose into the vision of the heavenly spheres, and all knew what none was able to speak;—by these and all such hallowed and tender remembrances and thoughts, let us at once perpetuate and ennoble the inner relation and the deep sympathy. Let the whole become as the rod and the staff with which the Lord comforteth us, until we follow the departed,—until heaven opens, and we find ourselves surrounded by the larger family, descending for ever to embrace and take up the asking and toiling souls on earth.

## THE PRAYER OF THE BROTHER OR SISTER.

O God, thou infinite and holy One! I feel myself unworthy to stand before thee, my sins in the light of thy purity, my nothingness before thine unspeakable greatness. But yet so good thou art, so dear to my soul, I would never leave thee, my Father. I beseech thee, Lord, to take away my sins, to purify my heart, to fill me with all virtue. Grant that, as in all my relations, so likewise in those of the family, I may be true, sincere, obedient to thee, dutiful to those with whom I am connected. Keep me from selfishness, from a wilful and an imperious spirit, from irritation and peevishness of temper, from every unkind disposition, toward my brothers and sisters. Inspire me with pure love to them, with a readiness to surrender my will to whatever is duty, to serve them gently and cheerfully, to bear and to forgive every little injury which I may chance to suffer, and always to maintain a calm mind and an open and generous soul. Make me humble, even as thy dear Son was humble; and with him enable me to seek, not mine own will, but thine; not mine own advantage, but the welfare of all.

O Father, bless thou my brothers and sisters. Preserve each of us from ignorance and error and sin. Open our minds to knowledge; reveal



in us thy truth; imbue us with thy spirit of holiness. Grant that our love to each other may grow daily stronger and stronger; that, free from jealousies and pride and all unkindness, we may seek each other's good and rejoice in it heartily, and each may labor for other rather than for himself, and soul may live united to soul in one everlasting brotherhood. And empower us also to fulfil the desires and the prayers of our father and mother, shunning what they would have us shun, doing what they would have us do, becoming in our whole character what they would have us become. While we dwell with them and with each other, grant it may be with the dearest affection and mutual service, that, when we shall be separated far from our native home, every remembrance shall be bright and joyful, and life shall be for ever endeared by the attractions which draw us still to this one centre of our souls. Here, O Lord, grant that we may receive influences which shall make us a blessing to larger portions of thy great family. Grant that here we may form a character, which thy culture shall perfect in the future, preparing us, as for every service of earth, so for higher service in future stages and scenes of the existence which thou hast appointed unto us. Amen.

## SECTION V.

## DISSOLUTION.

THE predominant thought has been attraction. Youthful attachments have grown into marriage. The child has made marriage dearer, and has opened new sources of kindness and of duty, those of parentage and childhood. As the family enlarges, nothing of the old lost, a new sympathy develops itself, brothers and sisters loving, rejoicing, sorrowing, together. Sometimes many years pass, only to multiply, to widen, to unite, to bless, these circles within a circle. We need not stop to muse upon it, how beautiful the whole thus growing into perfection of household bliss, imaging the grand order of the universe.

But our last thoughts had something sombre in them. And those thoughts stay with us always, as if asking to meet our sad questions. Alas! the valley through which we must walk with those we love best is sometimes deeper than they can surmount; the shadow of death hardens into the reality; and what had been to us the promise of beauty and joy, remains only as the memory of a bright dawn, so soon overcast. There are indeed partings full of sorrow, besides this last; hours when the child goes

from home to school or to business, and can never come back as he went away; new projects, new relations, new pursuits, other associates, and untried perils to his virtue; when, in later years, he finally passes from his first home, and thenceforth returns only as a visitor, alone or in the occasional gatherings which may recall for a little while the scenes of the past. But these separations, these successive dissolutions, we may call them, of the family, with their sorrows, have also their promise and hope. They come in the way of Nature, extending and perpetuating her courses, and renewing even in the old new sympathies and loves. Only one dissolution is felt to be final. These all want their consolations; this one asks with earnest voice some light which shall penetrate the valley, some trust which shall brighten death, a rod and staff at once to guide and to comfort the bereaved heart.

We feel it always in the course of nature, that those who have lived life through should leave it at last. Even for such there are some natural tears. If all is happy as earth can be, and a family from which none have been taken has given out all the sons and daughters to become in their turn centres of new life, and first of the whole, by slow decay, the father and the mother pass away, still there is a sorrow. The forms

so venerable and dear, which we have seen ever since our eyes opened to the light, we shall see no more for ever. The centre of so many attractions is transferred into the mysterious region, never more to draw the dissolving circles around it, to remain unseen until we perhaps may perceive its presence in the same hidden sphere. And if so we weep over those whom no love would recall if it could, how much more over others, whose promise reached forward into years more numerous, it may be, than our own! The marriage, contracted as if but yesterday, has been dissolved to-day, and the young husband or the young bride is widowed now; who can presume to speak or soothe the grief? Or later, in the uncertain years which follow from the bridal to old age, the widowhood may come; but never is the heart ready to yield the life which is for ever growing into unity with its own. Those surviving, how many times must they drink the bitter cup! There is now the infant, calling forth the glad hope and revealing every day new beauty; there is the daughter rich in the hopes of youth and sweet affections; there is the son, full of life and noble energies; there is the child at every age with its peculiar attractions; and the parent, powerless to help, looks on in silence while all passes from sunshine into the untraversed shade. The vision

never disappears. And therein how soon do young hearts learn the sorrow which life brings with it? An elder or a younger, a guide or one whom they might lead, has become so early the monitor of the great future; and, bright as childhood or youth may be, this strange experience has spread over the world a solemnity which can never be removed. It is not strange how much these things have moved men to muse on the mysteries of life and death, and to accumulate images which may set them forth. Nor is it strange that they have even sought out contrasts between the permanence of nature and the fugitive hours of man. Our life is a vapor, but the vapor reappears another day; our life is a flower, but the plant survives the fading leaves, and grows into fresh beauty. The spring fades into autumn; but the very winter leads on another season of quickened growth, and the bare earth, the stiff shrub, the leafless tree, are all green again. Suns rise, if they set; and the moon which wanes, grows soon to its full. Nature lives, rising even from apparent death. But man dieth, nor has spring or morning ever yet called him forth to life and joy. The heavens and the earth are unchangeable and everlasting; until they pass away, he shall not be roused from his sleep. And so, looking up from the seeming abyss, how many times has the heart breathed

out to the great Power that desperate utterance of the ancient sufferer, — Thou destroyest the hope of man!

And this, besides the sadder sorrows of a home into which vice has entered. Bitter and selfish alienations; hatreds severing those whom nature has joined together; violent passions indulged until the violence has made the character ferocious; sensual appetites fed until they have become insatiable, and even drunkenness, adulterous connections, and who can name the pollutions? imbruting what had once seemed minds full of brightness and promise;—these and any of the thousand sins which debase humanity and hide God from us and make existence a curse rather than a blessing, — let us pray they may be for ever averted. Alas! if ever with heart utterly bowed and hopeless, it is amidst such visions of a darkness which is only darkness, of a death deeper than the grave, the husband or wife, the parent or the child, the brother or the sister, mourns that all is lost: even the heavens are eluded, and with sadder gloom the dark word may be repeated, Thou destroyest the hope of man!

The patriarch of the same story was true to his own feeling, and to the faith of his time, when he spoke so mournfully and hopelessly. And when, in a very different spirit, Epicurean

poets have wailed over the brevity of life and the dissolution of mortal hopes and human relations, calling us therefore to mirth and festivity, poor as their moral has been, the fact is as they report, and man is the frail and fading flower they sing. Frail and fading, so long as we look only to his external condition and his earthly relations. But to us there is another and a higher view. Three forms of sorrow stand before us: the separations which changes in life necessarily produce in families, the final issue of death, the possibility or the fact of a vicious character. Unlike as these are in themselves, they agree in this, — that they disclose in us depths which need something to fill them; they bring sorrows which ask for comfort; they reveal weakness, which solicits strength other than we can command. What is there for us to trust, as our families are scattered in different ways and pursuits, leaving our age on the verge of loneliness? Whither shall we look for joy, when the eyes which used to beam on us are closed for ever? Where shall we find peace, if worse than death has entered the sacred place, making home more than desolate? Upward we must rise to the Father, who not only receives the wanderer, but continues evermore to invite him back; who watches alike over the living and over those we call dead; who guides and com-

forts his children through every valley and shadow and winding path, that he may gather them at last into the great family.

To this point our thought has been partial, even though true. It has been the fact of nature, rather than the reality of spirit. But in this added view, the whole scene is changed. Suppose one to have walked some thick, clouded night, lonely, wandering, through dark and tangled forests, clambering over rocks, stumbling at the many encumbrances of his course, until with the dawn he sees a morning red, and stars hiding themselves in the fresh glow, and the sun coming up at last to bathe the earth in light. Below him the hill-side and forest which he passed in such gloom, the dark ways, the dim paths, the whole midnight so late, now so changed! The world shines now, glorious and calm in its beauty. And thus, after the lapse of weary ages, man has been led upward to the headland from which he may look; above him, the blue sky; in the east, the rising sun; below him, the earth resting in celestial light. Turn where he will, God is there. The wonderful night vision is renewed; the ladder whose foot rests on the earth reaches to heaven, angels ascending and descending on it, the Lord standing above it, his voice of promise sounding into the soul; no sooner does he awake out of his sleep



than the man exclaims, Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not.

Once raised to this great insight, he perceives that God creates, not destroys, and that, if he excites hope, he will certainly fulfil it. The family, wherein our hopes and our affections spring up and grow or wither, suggests to us the analogies, perhaps we may say the principles themselves, of his relations to us, of the discipline by which he teaches and trains us. The parental element is pure love; but love seeks ever to bless and improve, never to curse and hurt. The child wants many things which older wisdom knows would destroy, or at least injure him. Love itself takes them away, though the child is grieved or made angry. The child declines also quite as many things which the parent knows he needs; and the higher wisdom does not refuse to give what is unwelcome. So the Universal Father, against the will and the passions and the appetites of his children, gives and withholds according to his love, not their choice, and blesses them in spite of themselves. Only the deed which he empowers us to perform, and which so we may distort to wrong, can be really, essentially, wholly evil; and when we have sinned, even then his love at once gathers about us all holy influences, that he may redeem and save and bless us, even from

our chosen evil seeking to derive means of exalting us to higher rectitude. And as relations dissolve, and hopes full of vain dreams, shadows of dreams, lose themselves in mid-air, we need not complain; suffer him to teach us with effect that only he is true Father; that only heaven is home; that only the communion of pure souls is the enduring family; and that all our losses are suggestions of the immortal boon which nothing but our own misdeed can turn to evil.

What, then, if friends dearest to us of all go far from us, and we seldom or never meet them more? Beyond the human motives which have wrought the separations, there is a Divine influence, an infinite love, an unsearchable wisdom, which guides them all, and shapes them to purposes beyond our sight. What if they pass for ever from us? There is no death. There is no hate. The Father loveth them and loveth us. And to him they live, as to him we live. Evermore he sendeth forth his spirit to create new capacities of good, to fill such as already exist, and through sorrows no less than joys, through dissolution no less than connection, through death as well as life, to waken and accomplish the hope of man.

I have shrunk from the endeavor to put into words what may be the feelings and aspirations of the heart in such hours. Yet are there no

seasons in life wherein the feelings are more deeply touched to religious issues, when the aspirations, even if silent, are more free and sincere, toward God and heaven. So I could not decline to translate them into a few simple words:—

O Lord, thou gavest; help us to thank thee for the gift. O Lord, thou hast taken away; help us still to say, Blessed be the name of the Lord! Our hearts are touched with the grief, which we confess thy providence to have called forth within them; suffer us never to think of thee as afflicting us willingly, as grieving thy children needlessly, as taking pleasure in our sorrows. Doubtless thou art our Father! We dwell amidst darkness; thou art Light. We see but the dim vision of thy glory; thou seest all, and what is dim to us is clearer than day to thee. Let us lay our hands upon our lips; let us prostrate ourselves in silence before thee; let us trust thy love; thou doest all things well. O God, whose spirit encircleth the heavens and the earth, and flows through all souls, strengthen us to faith in thy power, so mighty to all effects; in thy wisdom, so full, so unsearchable, so perfect; in thy love, for love thou art, and Father of all. We have blessed thee, Father, for thy mercies, when all was glad around us: enable us to bless thee now, when sorrow comes and

joy is dissolved in grief. Thy mercies can never fail. Be thou, Lord, our solace, our trust, our hope. From the earth we look to thy heaven; from this realm of death, to thee, Source of eternal life. Thy peace be with us.

Leave us never for an instant to sorrow without hope. Thine is our Lord Jesus Christ, thy beloved Son, thy benignant Image, the Messenger of thy truth. We bless thee for his immortality, for his resurrection out of the darkness and the sepulchre; for his word, Because I live, ye shall live also; for his ascension to thy right hand, and our trust in him to go up and dwell with thee, his Father and our Father. Enable us thus to feel that death has indeed passed for ever away; that all is now life in thee. Father, we have lost nothing. Thine own it is which thou hast taken back to thee;—thine own, the life withdrawn from us, dwelling still amidst the spheres of thy boundless creation. And thine own are we who weep on earth, whom thou wilt call in the fitting hour. Make us ever ready to hear and obey thy voice, O Lord! Blessed be thou, God, even thou, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hast begotten us unto a living hope by the resurrection of thy Son unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away. Blessed be thou, now and for ever. Amen.

## CHAPTER II.

### FRIENDSHIP.

THE attachments of the family are not more natural in reality than those of friendship. Affection may be called indeed the essence of humanity. If we begin with the central attraction, and follow it out, the course is that already presented from marriage through parentage and childhood into the fraternal circle. If we begin with the affection which is developed earliest in time, and follow from infancy the course to maturity, the filial is the first appearing in the soul, then the fraternal, afterward the connubial, then the parental. But whichever view we take of the domestic series, there is yet another attachment than it gives us, succeeding in time the filial and fraternal, and coexisting with the later developments of love, not to disturb them, but to grow by their side as distinct and yet kindred.

The child goes out from the family, and meets a second, it matters little whether like or unlike. The main thing is, that they are two persons chancing to come together, and

through circumstance or choice or the conjunction of both kept together for considerable times, exchanging thought and feeling, helping each other in some difficulties, finding common interests, common pleasures and pains, joys and sorrows. The connection may be formed also at any period later than childhood, only let there be sufficient in common to give them interest the one in the other, and a fitness on the part of both to enjoy friendship at all, and to enjoy this intimacy in particular. This one thing, however, we may remark by way of precaution. Friendship is not a matter of choice or election. Let no man say, This is the person I will choose out of the many for my nearest associate. Nor, on the contrary, let him say, This person I shall decline to accept as friend. Calculation is out of the case. Choice cannot make friends. Election may determine one to converse much with another; but it cannot impart affinities. Nature is wiser than her children. She has two secret ways of bringing them into relation and sympathy; first, through the correspondence, whether of likeness or of unlikeness, of essential qualities in the persons; next, through what is chance to us, the secret process by which she draws them into acquaintance with each other. Trust her, and be never wilful; she will take care for us; or rather, if we choose the language conse-

erated to religious thought, God will be the guide. Just so far as we obtrude ourselves, our plans, our purposes, our cunning, we mar the whole; and if there is society formed, there is not friendship inspired.

So friendship begins. In the same way it grows. There is no need that we should seek to justify it to our minds. Probably we should fail, if we made the trial. Let a person in some thoughtful hour say to himself: Here I find myself, united in strong attachment to a friend who returns my sympathy. Really this is a happy experience. I rejoice so to love, so to be beloved. But after all, how comes my friendship to fix on this particular person? What are his special excellences? Wherein is he worthier than another? Why should I bestow my heart here rather than somewhere else?—Now this course of thinking, not unnatural it may seem, completely overlooks the element and the conditions of personal attachment. Not indeed that we should be careless of the characters of our associates; not that we should admit the intimacy of the bad, because there may be some blind affinity reached in us by some quality in them; but that we should learn to recognize the powers lying beneath our wills and our understandings, of which we feel the influence but cannot see the depth of the fountain, and accept

them as of higher authority than any wilful thought of ours. So, without trying to settle definitely the precise characteristics of those we love, without measuring just the compass of their natures and seeking to regulate our intimacy by the result, let the soul flow forth spontaneously, and find, not consciously select, its own mate.

But this endangers our virtue, it may be said; we shall be just as likely to find bad men as good. The caution involved in this suggestion is of unquestionable worth to parents and teachers in their oversight of the young. The character yet unformed, there should certainly be care, great care, to protect them from the peril of such friendships as may become allurements to vice or hinderances to virtue. But in after life for a man to use this argument against trust in the spontaneous affections, is less argument than confession. The boasted judgment of the world is by no means so wise in the formation and the growth of intimacies, as the humble instinct of the pure heart. What communion hath Christ with Belial? There is no necessity that Belial carry his name written on his forehead; that he should be shown in his pollutions and deformities; that even the mask of a celestial form which he may put on should be wholly thrown off. The Christ can see the demon through any



illusion. The spirit of good feels evil as an alien presence, sooner than any speculation has proved it to be evil. And on this principle the very fact of affinity to a bad man should lead us first of all, not to censure of him, but to interrogation of ourselves. If he can fascinate us, then there is something in us akin to the fascination. Let us break the spell, not by rudely repulsing our associate, but by overcoming the evil in us which gives it strength, by cherishing the good in whose presence it is powerless; either he will be reclaimed, or we released. Evil will turn away from good, and repel it. If we become godlike, we need not fear that anything infernal will seek our company. To the person of mature years, we may simply commend the thorough discipline of himself to a divine virtue; this will determine its own friendships. Or, if this should drive him to solitude, it will prepare him to go alone, so far as one can ever be alone when the Father is with him.

Passing from the formation and growth of friendship, we come to the thought, presupposed in the preceding, of its nature. Perhaps none have commended it to us with greater fervor than some ancient poets and philosophers. And the consideration of this, with the added fact that the Christian Scriptures are supposed to pass it over in silence, may have inclined many

to seclude it from a place in Christianity. What shall we say here? Many things might be said, of which there is time but for these few. Christianity, considered as we are contemplating it now, — Christianity, regarded not as an historical fact, or series of facts, but as the everlasting spirit of the Christ, as the quickening life, as the regenerative power, one and the same in essence, however various in form, through all ages, — is the source, the centre, the end, of all true virtue, and, by consequence, of all the relations which virtue establishes. Christianity so viewed, Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, may be regarded rather as one with Divine Virtue in all its developments. Now the soul of Christianity, one with the soul of virtue, is pure love; the form or body of Christianity, one with the form or body of virtue, is communion. But of communion a religious friendship, that is, a friendship whose soul is true love, is a particular and most intimate portion. It is such communion heightened by the nearness of personal acquaintance, joined to the special fitnesses of the persons to understand and bless each other. Thus, even if the Christian records say little, or even nothing, of friendship under that precise name, yet Christianity does in itself contain it, as the whole a part, or unfold it, as the tree its flower and fruit.

There is, however, this peculiarity. The ancient modes of friendship exhibit something exclusive in their spirit. They were not only attractions, but repulsions. They might not draw the persons into undue unity, but they made them partakers of such antipathies and jealousies and unkindnesses, as Christianity permits neither to those who injure us nor to those who injure our friends. The friendship of Christianity repels none; it simply gathers and concentrates the elements of its divine spirit on the persons nearest to each other, and most capable of mutual offices.

Thus far, one may think, perhaps, we have nothing which needs a celestial guidance. We meet, our hearts are knit together, nature and Christianity unite to form and hallow the connection. It is true. But the statement is far from exhausting the subject. This meeting of kindred hearts, their mutual sympathies, the nature which each partakes, the Christianity which hallows all,—whence and what are these? Whence but of the Divine soul living through all, connecting all, centre and end of all? What but emanations and inspirations of the present Father? Subtract this inflowing spirit, leave in the relations of such as call themselves friends only the natural regards,—natural to the exclusion of everything divine and holy,—no pie-

ty, no charity, no reverence of truth, of justice, of purity, — what must be the remainder! Remembering that God is the All of whatever is really good and holy and virtuous, let each soul receive Him as its life, and become able to proffer something divine to other souls. Thus is spiritual and immortal friendship formed and advanced toward perfection.

Such, however, is the strange mixture of good and evil in the characters of men, that, as we can proffer to none the attraction of entire purity, so none can give back to us a friendship void of some perils to our integrity. The very affection which draws us to another may perhaps inthrall us in some measure to his thought and will. He may be free from vice; his conduct may be virtuous and noble, his spirit devout and faithful; how can there be danger even from the most intimate relation? Precisely this: we may make ourselves second to him; his word may be our oracle, his character our model, his will our master. So we may fail, through subjection of ourselves to another, of reaching that height of virtue which consists in immediate harmony with the spiritual order. If, on the contrary, with qualities which command us, the friend should combine faults, possibly vices, which lose their deformity by their better associations, in addition to the servility which is in itself an

evil, we may receive the infection, before we are aware, of moral or religious depravity, losing our principles in our kindness. The rudest nature repels the open foe from the hearth and the altar; a severer duty befalls, when for virtue's sake even friend and lover must be sacrificed to the purity of our hearts and the holiness of our worship. Whoever has had experience can testify what it is so to grieve where he deeply loves, and to bear reproach for infidelity where he would surrender all but faith for conciliation. The one comfort remains: the Good Shepherd is with him.)

Nor only should we beware of the peril. Let friendship be consecrated as help to the culture of all virtue. Let us at once give and accept every healthful influence. Never let the friend, however strong his conviction of the truth in that which he holds, think of exacting conformity to his own thought and his own methods: whatever power he wields over a kindred mind, let him put forth to unfold its freedom and its spiritual energies. Nor yet, however sure he may be of the wisdom and the virtue of his associate, let him ever fail of accepting from him only the influence, which, instead of weakening, does but strengthen and ennoble, his own character. The harmony and perfection of nature comes, not of vassalage imposed or accepted,

but of the completeness with which each thing fills out its own order and destiny; sun, moon, earth, air, water, plant, tree, flower, all, giving themselves of their own essence each to quicken other, each receiving of other to retain or to set forward its own perfection. So let all men acknowledge the qualities of their friends, the spheres to which they belong, the courses which a higher wisdom assigns them, however distant from our own, and, reverencing the freedom and the love wherein all are called to move, at once encourage them by generous sympathy, and grow through the virtue whose influence they share.

#### THE PRAYER OF THE FRIEND.

Great God! thy powers are inexhaustible. The skies above us shine in thy light; the earth around and beneath us is full of thy riches. Nature hath birth and growth in thee; life floweth evermore from thy deep fountains. Man is image of thee, — godlike soul enshrined in terrestrial body. Thine are all his affections, all his powers, all his affinities and relations; open mine eyes to see thy love and wisdom and might in and through the whole. And especially grant that, in this intimate connection of hearts, I may see thee, and be drawn nearer unto thee. Help me to love my friends sincerely,

purely, with my heart freed of all selfishness, pride, and envy, and every other ungentle temper. Inspire me with unfeigned desire to serve them and promote their true welfare; to rejoice in any superiority which they may acquire, whether in estate, in reputation, in person, or in mind; and to make their virtue and happiness a gladness and source of gratitude in my own heart.

For each whom I call my friend, I beseech of thee, Father, thy blessing, thy guidance, thy spirit. Keep each from sin, from temptation, from every evil. Breathe true holiness into the heart, and give power over all the seductive influences of the world, and establish the dominion of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Grant that every relation of life may be hallowed, every duty performed with faithfulness, every trial borne with constancy, and full preparation made for the services and communion of a higher state.

O God of purity and love! grant unto us in all our intercourse such a presence of thy spirit, that we shall each aid other in becoming like unto thee. Help us to speak only words of truth, to do none but deeds of kindness, to excite no other spirit than that which quickens piety, virtue, gentleness, and universal charity. But if at any time, through delusion of thought

or perverseness of feeling, either of us should be prompted to mislead another, to lower the reverence of truth, to disturb the foundations of faith, to make virtue seem worthless or shadowy, then, O Lord, enable us to resist the evil in thy spirit of love and holiness and peace. Bring back the wanderer to thy fold, and save all from going astray. Plant in the soul a higher reverence of thy truth; establish a living faith on everlasting grounds; quicken the eye to see virtue, how full it is of worth, how substantial, how divine; and enable us to aid each other in building up our whole life after the pattern which thou hast revealed and made glorious in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



## CHAPTER III.

### NEIGHBORHOOD.

THE bond of friendship has been sometimes stronger than that of either the filial relation or the fraternal. The bond of neighborhood is always looser than either;—looser, but not less natural. Attachment to the neighborhood is, on the contrary, just as natural as attachment to parent, to brother or sister, or to friend, and, in virtue of the same nature, feebler and more diffusive.

There are different methods by which neighborhood is produced. The simplest, and perhaps earliest, is what may be called local. Different persons and families are brought near together in one place. The nearness begets acquaintance, sometimes ripening into intimacy. The identity of place establishes affinities through their occupations, whether the same or different. If the same, they will often help each other in the common work or business. If different, the very difference unites them, each supplying what the other wants. So to nearness of place

is added the principle which, as commerce, encircles the world; and within a small community the germs soon appear of the relations and interests which, under other names, constitute states, nations, the world.

Suppose the few families gathered about some waterfall, or near the head of the tide on a large river, or upon deep and secure bays of sea or ocean, or anywhere else, growing to thousands, the city supplanting the village, and, for the work and traffic which once occupied them, navigation, commerce, trade, connecting them with a wide interior communication, and introducing them into relations with all islands and continents. By such a process neighborhood passes gradually from mere place to something else. It connects men of corresponding pursuits, of certain degrees of wealth or want, of kindred tastes and habits. One may hardly know who they are that go into the next door, or hear the same voice from the same pulpit year after year; the community of place has dissolved in community of business, or of position, or of character, or whatever it may be, good or ill, dividing society, and creating new neighborhoods.

Even place, however, has always something to do with neighborhood. The citizen may think little about it, when he is at home. But

when he has gone abroad, and for weeks and years seen no form from his native home, heard no voice speak of whom and what he loves there, the stranger who comes from the same spot is at once a neighbor. He has walked the same streets, known the same names, been one of the many to whom that earth and sky are sacred, and the very stones of this Jerusalem are precious. As, on the other side, while place seemed most closely to define the relation, already the incipient tendencies to neighborhood grounded on some other basis appeared. Other things being equal, the farmer would connect himself with the farmer, the mechanic with the mechanic, the tradesman with the tradesman. Persons of active habits would meet each other more naturally than those of retired manners. The studious will seek such as understand and help their thoughts. Not barely from pride, on the one side, envy on the other, but from the relations and affinities generated by their respective conditions, the richer and the poorer, even of the smallest and simplest society, will indicate the approach of that separation which becomes too often almost an impassable chasm. Thus the elements of neighborhood, beginning with that which fixes the name, and going out into the various classes of affinity which succeed, all really coexist throughout, in different degrees and combinations.

But what has all this to do with the celestial guidance and comfort? Much, in various ways. First, as it reveals one great power of the Divine Creation. Not more really does the Unseen Power plant the trees in the forest, open the oceans, cut the channels of the rivers, and clothe Nature with the whole primeval beauty, than it leads men into these solitudes, and excites them to their several processes of cultivation, and in and through the whole draws them into the relations and kindnesses of an enlarging community. Let us learn to see God in man and his deeds, as distinctly as we have been taught to see him in Nature and her works. Chiefly, however, as this view discovers to us a large sphere of duties, of allurements, of sorrows.

1. There are duties, duties of divine and perpetual obligation, connected with this natural fact of neighborhood. We owe to the men near to us, to those we meet from day to day, to the society with which, whether through place or any cause, we are connected, — we owe to each and all the highest debt, a pure and noble life. Every neighbor in every condition has the right to look always to each person for that greatest beneficence, a true man. And that same beneficence he is bound to impart. We may be rich or poor; we may be honored or dishonored; we may be sought of men or cast off by men; we

may be learned or ignorant; the world may have fulfilled our largest hopes, or seem to have defrauded us at every step; it matters not: there is always this one thing to give, a soul, rich with immortal wealth, approved of truth, dear to the Father, taught of the spirit, sure of the un-deceiving hope. Always this to give, unless we rob ourselves of the treasure, and fling away the inspiration itself of God. The rich men in the sacred story cast their gifts into the treasury, and the poor widow cast in hers; she more than they, because theirs was part of an abundance, hers the whole of her possession. Afterward two disciples met the lame beggar; they had no money to give; "Silver and gold have we none, but that which we have give we unto thee: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." And this, without even the widow's gift, was greater. But neither gold and silver, nor healing power, nor any outward gift, may we be able to confer: if we are, let us grudge nothing, it is the Lord's, not ours, trusted to us for service of charity, not for selfish indulgence; if we are not, then only the worst infidelity to God and to the neighbor can hinder us and bereave him of a Divine Virtue. This is the true name of Jesus; in this the great miracle is wrought; in this, not only the lame walk, but the devils are cast out and the dead live. All

else which we receive from above, let us give as freely as it comes to us; this, with all, in default of all.

2. There are allurements. Nowhere is there society, however formed, but it contains them. Beauty, wine, wealth, authority, everything, in so far as it is akin to the soul of man, and so blesses us while reason and virtue control our choice and our deeds, is yet perilous, for it may dethrone reason and subdue virtue, and inthrall the pure mind to the impure lust. Then these direct allurements drawing us off from heaven, we may be doubly moved in the downward course, by the prevalence of some vitiating sentiment become a very atmosphere of the neighborhood. Among the Romans, they may require us to fulfil the wretched proverb, do as the Romans do. Hardly true, when the Romans do right; for servile conformity is bad, though the form or custom be good. Obviously there is added evil when the form or custom is in itself bad. But it is hard — how many have felt it! — to decline the fellowship. To accept it, how often has it been death! What shall empower us to stand apart, to walk alone, but the spirit of the Lord? What shall give us comfort in the gloom of desertion which follows, but the rod and staff of the Good Shepherd?

3. There are sorrows. There are sorrows

which have been thus far suggested, — the necessities of separating ourselves from our neighbors, of incurring their hatred or their contempt when they would allure us from the heavenly way, of meeting antipathy where we sought sympathy, of enduring all which conscience demands in behalf of the universal right against the particular claim. But there are others also, the sorrows which come with poverty, with sickness, with death and widowhood and orphanage in the families around us, calling us away from ourselves to our neighbors, urging us to proffer the solace which we feel so wholly powerless to impart. We would relieve distress, perhaps we have nothing to give but our hearts; we would soothe the widowed heart, but the grief is too deep, and we can only sit in silence; the heart prays, but the tongue is still, and our very consciousness of impotence to give peace may be mistaken for the insensibility which suffers a friend to weep, careless of his need. Or somewhere about us the youth has fallen into sin, and pierced the hearts of parents deeper than even death. How shall we soothe their sorrow? how help reclaim the wanderer? Many and frequent these sad hours. How shall we meet them? Nothing remains for us but to follow the Shepherd where he takes the lambs in his arms, and gently leads the feeble, and goes out into the

wilderness to find and bring back the lost, and, with him who never chides, who never taunts, who never reproaches, even the weakest and most wayward, to pour forth the tenderness and the mercy which his love imparts, making every word, every deed, our very silence, a benediction.

#### THE PRAYER OF THE NEIGHBOR.

Almighty God, who art the author of all human society, and by whom the relations and attachments of neighborhoods are established, I pray thee to prepare me for the duties, the joys and sorrows, and the temptations, to which through them I may be called. Enable me to bear with me continually the consciousness of those eternal laws which thou hast written in my heart, and the strength to fulfil them in all my conduct. Inspire me with love to my neighbors, sincere, fervent, active; with a disposition to sacrifice my own conveniences and will to their good, and to make myself cheerfully servant to all. Suffer me never to defraud or in any way deceive them in buying and selling; never to withhold from them anything, which they need and I possess; never to defame their characters, to detract from their virtues, to exaggerate their faults, or in word or deed to inflict injury upon them. If they do me favors in my wants, incline me to receive them with all freeness and thank-



fulness, and to return their kindness by kindred sympathy, willing still to be indebted to them, as also to do them service. And if at any time some may chance to do me wrong, enable me to maintain meekness and serenity, sincere goodwill, and humble and hearty desire to serve them as I can. Leave me never to boast myself in any virtue, whether of justice and charity, or of forbearance and forgiveness; but quicken me to that genuine love of thee for thyself, and of man as image of thy being, which shall move me to the pursuit and practice of whatever is divine and humane, in solitude and in secrecy no less than in society and under the eye of the world. Discover to me my sins, that I may forsake them; let me hide any virtue from myself, lest I be proud; and nourish thou within me the sweetest and lowliest nobleness of soul.

Grant, O Father, that through this spirit pervading us our whole neighborhood may be virtuous, united, and happy. Fill every family with gentleness and harmony, every heart with pure and divine attractions; and make us all so complete in our mutual sympathies, that discord shall be prevented, and concord established among those of every age and every state. Remove pride, and implant humility. Remove covetousness, and implant charity. Excite each to sorrow with those who sorrow, to rejoice with

those who rejoice; to lift up the fallen, and to help those who stand; to cheer the saddened heart, and to share in the joy which flows from the glad soul. So make us true children of thine, thou Father of all. Amen.

## CHAPTER IV.

### COUNTRY.

It may be repeated: Every creation of God is, in kind and nature, essentially good; thus every state and relation natural to man, as well as man himself in his organic constitution. At the same time, the mysterious power with which man is endowed may pervert and profane himself, all his faculties, each state and relation of his nature. A result so disastrous can be prevented only by the hallowing presence of the spirit. Besides this, apart from the liability to sin,—we might add, to sorrow,—let it be remembered that in real truth our whole power, life itself, all its activities and susceptibilities, the soul, the entire being, and the circumstances surrounding us continually, proceed from the Lord, ever present to us, our only strength and light and comfort.

Among these circumstances and relations, at once divine and natural, are those of Country, that larger and more comprehensive neighborhood. Slightly as at first view this may seem

connected with our great topic, the few words already written suggest a connection really most near and intimate. The suggestion may find larger illustration in the thoughts — so few they must necessarily be — which follow.

Over and above vicinity of place and varieties of social affinity, common interests and pursuits, which belong to neighborhood also, country establishes another bond of relationship. Anciently, as well as in later ages, it was not uncommon to describe our country as our parent. Without stopping to inquire how far this metaphor is true, how far it is false, we may remark the universal assumption by every nation, in every age, of parental authority. Through monarch, supposed to represent in his high person the sublime prerogative; through concert of chieftains, exercising supreme magistracy; or through commonwealth, acting directly or through conventions of its delegates, with or without prescripts and written statutes; the majestic and commanding form of Law is acknowledged, universal, absolute, final. Sometimes it may be depicted as will of God embodied in human government; sometimes it may be contemplated as the highest wisdom of the noblest minds acknowledged as predominant; sometimes as the ascertained and expressed will of the people, at least of the majority. Whatever the idea which exalts it,

there it stands, supreme through the whole compass of the nation whose unity, with its power, it at once represents and protects. Disobedience to this highest will, whether it be sin or not, is crime, which it punishes; as obedience to it, whether virtue or vice, is fidelity which openly or secretly it rewards. The extreme of evil to it is the effort to overthrow its dominion. Thus the looseness of connection, which in the neighborhood supplants the unity of the family, passes at length into a larger combination, the family symbolized in the state.

The tendency, we know, has been for some time to restrict the action of the state in its relation to the individual; to make governments less interfering and men more independent; to substitute for consolidated power a larger scope for personal freedom and thought. Still the principle itself of final and supreme authority inherent in the existing government is held, at least tacitly, perhaps among all nations of the earth. It may have withdrawn from many things over which it once stretched its power; but not the less tenaciously does it retain what remains of the ancient claim. Thus it asserts and puts forth that most awful power of maintaining peace or war, and of commanding in the terrible exigencies of the latter whatever amount of service may be deemed necessary from the citizens. Thus it

not only protects liberty to the extent of its choice, but claims and exercises the power of upholding the claim, misnamed right, to enslave myriads living within the territory which its jurisdiction covers. Thus it not only maintains the right to punish criminals, even to the extreme of death, but to define what are the crimes themselves, and to adjust the kinds and degrees of punishment. So we might proceed far.

Now the question with which we have to do at this time is not the rightful power of the country embodied in law and government. Great as this question is, and awaiting earnest investigation and a thorough answer, we must dismiss it for the view which belongs directly to our present purpose.

To love our country is as natural as to love our neighbor, our friend, our brother or sister, our father and mother, or ourselves. We are born into its atmosphere, as we are born into the air which encircles the earth. We are attached to the very soil which it covers, to the very sky which bends over it, to the waters which wash its coasts, to everything which bears its impress. We are educated to admire its history, to reverence its heroes and sages, to feel ourselves one with all which advances its interests, alien from everything which is hostile to it. The sentiment of patriotism is indeed like the appetites

of the body, good in themselves, asking the nourishment which befits them, readily supplied with whatever they really need, and thus, through the excess to which they are always so prone, calling for ever on us to control them by the higher laws of reason and virtue. A man may hate or grow indifferent to his country, as he may to his mother; but it is a distortion of nature which we may drop from our thoughts, as we sometimes drop minute fractions in arithmetical computations.

But our country, like a mother, may do wrong, and add to the first wrong that of endeavoring to compel citizens, like children, into support of such wrong. The central idea of the celebrated legislation of Numa, grant the old tradition, — and the principle is the same if we do not grant it, — was purely religious, not only in its fabulous origin, but in its political institutions. But to some Roman who, with Jew or Christian, should be persuaded that there is one God only, so that these deities are false, and should be moved, moreover, to bring his worship and his life into harmony with his inward conviction, his first deed of new worship is disobedience to the law of his country; so long as he continues this worship, he persists in his disobedience. Let him go farther, and endeavor to supplant the old religious institution by the simpler belief and ser-

vice, his crime is not less than the effort to subvert established laws, in modern phrase, the constitution of his country. The case is supposable, that another country and other citizens might be brought into similar antagonism. His country may seem to some honest man to have adopted laws, customs, methods of action, contrary to the eternal truth, the celestial love, the characters of divine humanity. In any other position of things, there can be no difficulty; he loves his country and delights to obey her parental laws. In this, there is obvious difficulty; he loves his country, but if he respects her laws, he is confident that he disobeys God.

There is difficulty here, we say. Not, however, difficulty regarding the decision of the true man. His course is clear, and he cannot decline it. But the difficulty lies in the reluctance, next to insurmountable, which the true man feels to all the circumstances surrounding the duty which he must perform. He loves peace, he is averse to contradiction; he loves order, he is averse to confusion; he loves law, his whole soul revolts at the thought of disobeying any true voice of the Lord; he loves his country, though he mourns over her sins, he shrinks from everything hostile to her true welfare. Some may be ready to exclaim, that the day has past, at least in our land, for any such conflict, and possibly may



laugh at the suggestion of an American, encircled by the protection and blessings of this Union, needing ever to retire into his closet and to pray to the Father for light and strength to guide and comfort him in the sadness of his relations to the country hailed so long as benignant mother of us all. There are those who feel that tears, not laughter and contempt, are called for even now, when one asks, in bitterness of soul, What shall I do for my country? There are who have asked that question already, not of the popular judgment, but of the Divine Oracle: more will continue to do it, and receive such response as is neither foreseen by them nor pleasing to others.

But why put the question? An obscure, insignificant man, why presume to meddle with things which wiser and greater than he will manage? Other answers suggest themselves readily. This is enough. Every man is virtually compelled to put the question, to meddle with these things. If he votes, that simple act demands solemnly that he do the deed religiously, faithfully, with all the knowledge he can acquire. If he refuse to vote, the refusal must be made with equal religion and solemn purpose. And besides this simple matter of suffrage, there are thousands of other methods in which he cannot choose but do something for

his country or against it; and he ought to ask the question, and to obey the voice which answers it. The very scoffer who mocks and sneers at the honest man who chooses to obey God rather than men, even when those men represent his own country, still demands aloud of him that he should do something, all which he can, for his country; that he should prove himself a dutiful citizen, a just and patriotic man, seeking and upholding his country's good. And the answer is: That is precisely what I would be. Dutiful! but what is the duty done, when I violate what I know to be duty? A dutiful citizen! but is that slavery to my city, my country? Does that exact of me surrender of allegiance to the city of God, which I am not yet ready to forsake; to the law of God, whose characters I cannot cease to read graven in my heart; to the silent voice in my conscience, which I cannot suppress, and which I hear as of heaven? A just and patriotic man! Is justice fulfilled by doing or approving injustice? Is patriotism falsehood to God and to man? My country's good! The sole good I know of my country, as of every man, is Virtue. Wealth is a shadow; power an engine of ruin; prosperity, what the world calls such, uncertain, fluctuating, a small thing at its height, sure to vanish in a little while, unless Virtue be confessed and obeyed as supreme.

What then is the light we need from above? That which shall discover to us the laws of justice and of love, commanding nations, as they command men, and requiring us to confess our country and her laws but second to them. What the strength which only the Lord can impart? That which shall empower us calmly to do the deed of right against even our country, and in the presence of reproach and hatred. What the comfort which in these dark hours descends only from the Father? That which shall reveal to us in the desert air one immortal sun; which shall open to us heaven, while the earth is compassed with gloom; which, amidst the deepest solitude, shall save us from being ever left alone. When the night comes, we would go to the mountain, and pray. God's angels come to us there. The tumult of the soul subsides; the calm which comes over us is great; and we return on the morrow wiser, stronger, of nobler spirit, to do with every duty this also, the duty of the man imbued with the spirit of holiness to the age and nation into which he is cast,—the duty, never of servile thrall, of false or foolish flatterer, of thoughtless conformist, or of any the like slave to the times and the popular sentiment, but of free man, conscious of his divine birth, speaking only truth, living honestly, accepting good wherever he

finds it, rejecting evil, let it clothe itself with what authority or splendor it will. The voice which he has heard forbids him to be conformed to this age; for this age is apostate from God, and commands him to be transformed into the character of the renovation, seeking ever to do the highest will. Not from his kindred only, when his kindred represent the presence of evil; not from his father's house only, when his father's house draws him from the higher home; but from his country the voice calls, that he get him out, when once his country throws itself between the soul of man and the spirit of God. And if the question rises, Whither shall I go? Where does this course lead? the answer comes, 'Trust me; unto a land — await the hour — that I will show thee.

Not unlike this may be the aspiration of the devout soul in the consciousness of such affections and such duties: —

Thou who alone art God of all the nations of the earth, assigning their habitations and their laws, watching over their courses, and adjusting their destinies to their characters, my heart ariseth unto thee for teaching and for guidance, for others as well as myself, for all throughout the country so dear to us all. We thank thee for that which is venerable and holy in the history of the past; for every noble instance of

abandonment to duty, and devotion to the worship of thee and the service of thy children; for whatever of sincere faith, and heavenly hope, and divine charity, hath ennobled and hallowed each period of its course; and for those great ideas with which thou hast blessed all true souls, enabling them thereby to give lustre to the ages in which they lived, and to prolong it into those which follow. Father, we beseech thee to renew the great revelation. Let thy truth shine into the minds of all our countrymen; let thy love draw their souls unto thee, and into communion with each other.

Thou seest, O God, how full our country is of sin; how through the various processes of government, through its relations to foreign nations, and those which connect it with the rights and the conditions of citizens and subjects, covetousness, selfish ambition, rapacious injustice, imperious tyranny, have already marked the course which it has pursued; how, through the numberless methods of more private intercourse, of commerce, of conversation, of business in all its forms, similar vices have diffused their corruption; and how now, while we are boasting of our liberties and our virtues, we are plunging into the sins which have debased older nations, and prolonging even a slavery which the soul abhors, and which the world is beginning every-

where to repel. Ours is a sinful nation, O Lord ; ours is a people laden with iniquity : our vices are multiplied, our oppressions are manifold and severe ; but we refuse to be corrected, and reject every voice which comes from thee calling us to repentance and amendment. Fill all hearts, thou Source of good, with godly sorrow, and rouse the nation to the faith, that the Lord God Almighty reigneth.

I beseech thee, Father, to grant unto me clearness of insight, humility of heart, penitence for every sin, strength to resist and overcome temptation, and some measure of power to meet and arrest the terrible current of iniquity. Save me from false and boasting pretence of love to my country ; save me from servility to any party or interest which prevails in it ; save me both from flattery and from censoriousness ; save me from yielding myself to public sentiment, from conformity to this age and nation. Enable me to be and to live as child unto thee, as servant unto mankind. O breathe this same spirit into all hearts ! that our whole land may be redeemed and exalted in the name and the spirit of thy Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE CHURCH.

It is not difficult to discover how natural are those social affinities which have been considered thus far. Just as natural, we may be ready to confess them, as the organic elements and qualities of the person, nay, portions of those very elements and qualities. The relations, the influences, the services, interwoven with each and all of the several conditions of family, of friendship, of neighborhood, of country, their sympathies and antipathies, and the needs which they involve of divine ministries, we may perceive at once to be vital, not factitious; spontaneous, not artificial; essential, not adventitious. They flow from nature, or rather from Him who is soul of nature, not from any will or policy of men. We come now to a topic, commonly regarded in quite another light. The Church—or general sentiment is misunderstood—presents itself to most men, whether religious or irreligious, not as a natural communion, but as a positive institution; not so much the product of a living

growth, as a form — shall we say it? — of mechanical combination; not as flowing from within, as stream from its fountain, but drawn from without, as waters to some cistern or artificial channel; not one with the essence of man, but dependent rather upon the will and the compact of men.

So the first thing we have to consider here is the vital relation of all men to the Church; not, of course, actual and conscious communion with it either in spirit or in form, but, as has been said, vital relation to it, — a relation to which our inmost nature attests, and which is as necessary to the integrity of our being as any other natural relation or affection. This again is a thought to which we would address ourselves before coming to the final topic, the depth, which is the same with the height and the breadth and the perfection, of the spirit, because the Church, fully formed and recognized in that higher sphere, yet assumes and encircles us earlier, and is, as it were, the intermediate through which from natural or animal we become spiritual, from earthly we rise to heavenly, thus fulfilling the prophetic idea of the Regeneration.

Let the thought, simple as it is, be kept distinctly before us, Man's relation to the Church, the religious communion, is vital, and an element of his nature. Without resorting to other sour-



ces of illustration, several and deep as they are, let us confine ourselves now to this one. The inmost essence of man, as the ultimate issue, the eternal life, is his capacity to know the Supreme Being, to know him as Father, to know him in consciousness of the love and the truth and the quickening power with which his spirit elevates the soul. Of this capacity let two things be now remarked: first, it is commensurate with the human race; secondly, it is the source or ground of communion.

1. It is commensurate with the human race. Not indeed, and let this be remembered carefully, the knowledge or consciousness actually gained or developed, but the capacity for it; this exists among all nations, through all ages, in every mind capable of reason and of rational activity. It is singular to observe how many references have been made to the illustration of some unknown writer, whose book concerning the world has gained a place among the writings of Aristotle. "They say," he tells us, "that the sculptor Phidias, while preparing the Athené in the Acropolis, engraved in the very middle of the shield his own figure, and connected it with the statue through some obscure art; so that, of necessity, should any one design to take it away, he must dissolve and destroy the whole statue. This," he continues, "is the method of God in

the world, sustaining the harmony and safety of the whole; except that he is not in the middle, where the earth is, and this dark turbid place, but above, and seated pure in a pure region." With this ancient writer, we remark, the Divine figure is wrought into the world, or as we say, the Universe, or Nature, the outward object. Modern writers, as one among the many instances of a progressive tendency to contemplate the inward subject, the soul of the individual man, sometimes transfer it to the mind. Thus Tillotson: "God himself hath wrought this image of himself upon the mind of man, and so woven it into the very frame of his being, that, like Phidias his picture in Minerva's shield, it can never totally be defaced without the ruin of human nature." Whether we take the ancient thought, and contemplate, with the larger views which science has opened, the circle and order and laws of nature, or the modern, and turn our contemplation inward upon the soul and its mysterious properties, the illustration contains equal truth and beauty. Always and everywhere, as men look out upon the world, they see, what they cannot avoid seeing, great effects of unseen power, endless combinations of wisdom, overflowing expressions of love. Like stars, these Divine ideas shine upon them through sky, air, earth, and ocean. Like flow-

ers, they grow and give out their fragrance over all the fields which our sight can reach. Like vital energies, they work in perpetually interwoven processes, simple and complex, through the whole enlarging web of existence. Invisible things are clearly seen through things which are visible. The beauty, in fact, which looks for ever on us from the great prospect of nature, and which, concealed in all things, reveals itself in all; the order, wherein the whole is arranged and harmonized; the spirit, in one word, which lives through all life, all motion, all form, quickening and blessing nature and man,—is just as evident to the mind, to the feeling as vital, to the entire inner sense as clear and present, as sound to the ear, or figure to the eye, or to any other outer sense the object which affects it. That is, God penetrates and overflows nature. Then, if we turn inward upon the soul, we meet again the same imperishable image. As in nature, so too within the mind, that image may sometimes seem broken, defaced, stained, shaded, darkened, but it is never destroyed. Not even atheist or idolater escapes the influence and impression of God, though the one casts the name away, the other disturbs the vision by thousands of confused refractions. And as the mind advances through the obscurities of ignorance and superstition toward clearer insight, it perceives

at length that, as God fills nature, —the presence which amidst all its changes can never pass away, vital through everything, — so does he likewise fill man; the undivided and unchanging Spirit, confessed or unacknowledged, sought or forsaken, loved or overlooked, the greatest fact, if we might so speak, within the experience and history of mankind.

2. This religious capacity is the source, the ground, or, to adopt another metaphor, the germ, of communion. In the simple recognition of the Father and reception of the love which is his being, the soul acknowledges and receives a principle which is not only devotion to the One God, but equally devout sympathy with whatever is godlike in man. So soon as the child knows the parent, there is an opening of the fountain which flows forth in affection to the whole family. So soon as the youth knows the parent country, there is an opening of the kindred fountain which flows forth to this and whatever pertains to it. And so soon as the filial soul knows the Supreme Parent, there is not less the opening of divine affections flowing forth to whatever is of God in nature and humanity. Flowing from one heart, it is met by the attractions flowing from other hearts touched by the celestial influence. These all meet and mingle together, and image in their sacred depths the communion of heaven.

We may go farther. The pure love in our hearts is not so much our own as His from whom it descends to fill and exalt us. God is love; and what there is in us of this infinite element is his influence into us, as what there is of the beautiful daylight about us, and through the air, is not a luminous mass struck off from the sun, and appropriated to here and there an eye or a spot of earth, but one unbroken sphere, encircling its own centre, and penetrating every transparency through the immense outflow. This unbounded effluence of the Father, as it gives of his spirit to all asking hearts, as it draws to himself all who take it to the soul, so, moreover, does it draw them nearer to each other, as rays are nearer while they approach to their centre. It goes and comes from each to all, from all to each, like the quickening air; or rather, like the air, it embosoms them together in its vast circle; like the still light, it girds them round with one unbroken irradiation.

So when the capacity has become a conscious power. But the capacity existed from the first. Men may spend years unconscious of it. They may forget God. They may let hope go. They may confess no relation to the religious communion, no connection with anything but the world. The holier seed is there notwithstanding, though buried up as under heavy clods.

The light is there, shining into the darkness, though the darkness cover and eclipse it. The life is there, though the frame is cold and hard, seeming without pulse and without breath. In some happier hour, the man may learn to know himself, rather to lose himself, in the light and life and sunny beauty with which the spring morning imbathes him in its fresh air, in the love and joy and deeper peace of the Lord. Whatever opinions men may hold of human nature as fallen or unfallen, as guilty or innocent, as debased or upright, this position stands in either case:— Man is capable of attaining this experience. There is at the least and the lowest so much of the celestial capacity within him, that it can flower into this sweet and perpetual communion; not alone, indeed, but through the dews and rains, the soil and air, the light and heat, and whatever other influences there may be, quickening the germinant power and perfecting it in harmony with the laws of its own nature. Deeper, let us add, and more intimate, than our natural relation to country, to neighborhood, to friend, or even to family, that relation, grounded in the very centre of our being, to the religious union which in its historical developments has received the name of Church, and from its living connection with the Christ is denominated Christian.

Limitations are now removed. The person as such, with his needs and supplies, gives us but a bounded form; the society of men, with their several relations, wants, and divine ministries, enlarges the circle, but it still has bounds,—bounds widening as the attractions apparently grow looser. But in distinct recognition of God uniting souls in reciprocal love, it is not so; the Church opens an illimitable realm. The walls which rise up between families, classes, nations, severing them from sympathy and intercourse so often, fall down; and infinite as the revelation of the Divine Presence to man, as well as to nature, so without bound and without end becomes the love of soul to soul, seeking to make itself actual through the whole compass of human activities. Churches may surround themselves with lines and barriers and bulwarks; they may become sectarian, national, secular; but the true Church, the religious communion, the Christian brotherhood, obliterates those lines, and throws down barriers and bulwarks, knows nothing of sect or nation, of ages and their fashions, but is spiritual, universal, holy, everlasting. The Church is the obedient flock, hearing no voice but the one which calls from above; following no leader but the Good Shepherd, as he conducts them in the green pastures, beside the still waters, or to the fold where they rest together under only his eye

and his protection. One fold, one Shepherd! his the light of their day; his the wealth of their pasture; his the fountains at which they drink; and when their way lies through rough passes and the darkest valleys, his the rod and the staff by which they are guided and comforted.

Here we might stay, but that we perceive questions arising before us, which individuals may feel of some import to their particular and practical relations to the body of the Lord. The first of all may be, whether really the doctrine now stated is true. But in this case, perhaps all which can be said is to commend the inquirer to his own earnest meditation. One may be thoroughly persuaded in his own soul, and may be penetrated by the most fervent affection to what he contemplates as truth, what he discerns as Church: but to a second person he can impart neither his thought nor his feeling. Each must be first seer, original lover. The second question may be, whether, admitting as theory what we have affirmed, we can derive from it any substantial benefit. Without dwelling on this answer, that the truth is of itself always substance, standing under the whole structure of things and holding them up,—of itself always a good gained, and a power of adding new good to the good already done,—we may give an



answer nearer, perhaps, to the spirit in which the question is put. The benefit is real and substantial in such recognition of the Church. The instant we perceive it as that which it actually is, the great family of God in heaven and on earth, we have obtained the unerring principle of judging all the claims set up for themselves by the numerous and sometimes arrogant sects of Christendom. Whatever in all sects, and out of the sects, is celestial, godlike, devoutly humane, we perceive at once to form an integral portion of the Church. Whatever in all sects and out of the sects is earthly, godless, undevout, inhuman, we perceive as soon to lie wholly outside of the Church. Our personal relation to the Church is also determined by the same test; not our creeds or our liberalities, not our pomps of ritual or our simplicities of worship, not our subjection to ecclesiastical prescriptions or our independence of usage, of authority, of form, — none of these, nor any the like things, are of value; but simply and wholly those essential principles, those primary elements, the truth and love of God, and the attractions and services of mutual communion with pure hearts. Thus does the Shepherd draw us to his fold; thus lead and preserve us in it.

In our age, sometimes, we may fear, through irreligion, sometimes, we may trust, through con-

founding sect with Church, many have seemed to look with aversion or contempt on the Church. Others, on the contrary, have been vehement in their expressions of reverence and fealty to the Church, still narrowing and debasing the idea by the sectarian and schismatic character which they have attached to it. The true feeling and thought — so to one at least it appears — are rare. Let us try to regain them. Assured that the Church is the divine union of mankind, its soul love, its form virtue, its action charity; that, as at once divine and human, it is illimitable and immortal; that through time and eternity it is the growing sphere of spirit and celestial beauty; — let us love it with an affection enlarging our freedom, not restraining it; uniting us to men the more closely as it rescues us the more thoroughly from their power; no longer keeping us from the Lord by its mediations, but for ever helping to raise us nearer to him by the spirit which it breathes over us, and the devout ministries of which it is God's angel.

So dim the perception, if indeed there is aught which may be called perception, of this holy communion, that, once attained, it rises into an enthusiasm; and, in the feeling of a new and glorious vision, the spirit bursts forth in silent or uttered rapture: —

Blessed be thou, my God! Blessed be thy

holy name for ever. Thou hast scattered the darkness, O Lord! thou hast made it flee before the brightness of thy coming. Thy prophets proclaimed of old thy universal presence; thy saints rejoice always to confess that thou fillest all things evermore. Above the loftiest height thou art enthroned; beneath the lowest depth thou shinest so that all is light. Beyond the remotest west is thy sun, which setteth not; in the farthest east, thy sun riseth in the eternal morning. Blessed be thou, Supreme Power! blessed be thou, Celestial Light! nearer than all, thou hast enabled me to find thee, — within all, inmost of all. The brighter world, on the verge of which I stand! The mystic heaven and earth! It encircles me from thee. From the centre of mine own soul, within the bright consciousness opening in my heart, thou revealest the greater creation. Over the dark abyss thy spirit broodeth even now; thy voice goeth forth, and I see the light spreading over the mystery; — another earth, and other seas, — thine, Almighty, — lying beneath thine eye, in still and everlasting worship! Other days roll on, a brighter sun shines, thy Sabbath draws near: Father, I am lost in thee, thy child so blessed of thy love!

Thine every soul that lives. Thine image dwelleth in it; thy light even in darkness, when the darkness receiveth it not; thy truth, though

clouds gather around it and hide it. Open every eye to see; make every heart glad through the vision of thy presence. Father, it is joy to see thy spirit moving through earth and air and sky; Father, it is bliss to feel thy love uniting us in family and in friendship; Father, how shall we praise thee for this deeper union? how celebrate thy presence drawing souls together, and, through the immense realm of spirit, creating thy great body, the holy communion, the living and immortal Church,—thy family, Father, in heaven and on earth?

Thy child, O let me be thy child, loving thee, obeying thee; loving all that is of thee, serving every soul in thy world. Only keep before me for ever the great revelation, the Christ embodied in the Church, the divine life renewing man, heaven imaged in earth; and I can ask no more. I am full of joy; thy peace is over me, thine eternal Sabbath. Thy children, O let all men learn themselves to be! thy children, Lord, loving thee, obeying thee; loving each other, serving each other. Open to them thy revelation; keep it before them for ever. So let thy Christ fill and perfect his divine body. So dwell thou within thine immortal temple. Amen.

PART III.

THE SPIRITUAL DEEP.



## SPHERE OF SPIRIT

WHEN once an ancient philosopher, so he was understood, denied the reality of motion, it has been pronounced a sufficient answer, some man arising in the company and walking. Precisely what the theory which the lover of wisdom maintained, we may not know perhaps. Quite probably, however, the answer was about the same which it would be for one to prove that the moon is moving some gusty evening by exclaiming, See there! See the moon scudding and running through those thin, broken clouds. Your eyes assure you that the moon moves and is not still. Just so men have answered Berkeley thousands of times. They supposed him to deny the reality of natural forms, and so proceeded to laugh at the nonsense of questioning what the five senses and universal experience of men put beyond the reach of doubt. Do we not see the sun and the earth? Do we not hear sounds from every side? Do we not taste the flavor of fruit, — smell the fragrance of the flow-

er, — touch things of more or less solidity continually? And does not every man know this beyond contradiction? And when they have put the triumphant interrogations, they might be astonished to hear the spirit of Berkeley reply: Yes. I have no more doubted these things than another. Do not dream that to me the sun was ever dark, the earth ever blank, nature a cheat. My theory, which ye so readily demolish, exulting over the ruins, never regarded the five senses, but sought something above the realm of the five senses. Suppose there were no God, no spirit, no living soul, or God, spirit, living soul, subtracted and utterly withdrawn from what we now perceive as sun, earth, elements; then also sun, earth, elements, vanish and are not. There being God's spirit, there being soul, these forms also appear and remain; — a beautiful order of existence, that I confess with undoubting assurance, corresponding with the human constitution, and present to man in those permanent appearances which he perceives through his senses, above, below, around, by day, by night. But the essential ground of all is, not the appearance to the sense, but the divine substance, of which the senses bring no testimony. These appearances are instant creations of the spirit, not self-existing objects.

We pass on. Berkeley and the old philoso-



pher may be right or wrong, for aught we have now to say. But when to the man of science or the man of the world in our times, denying with pride, with contempt, with a seeming horror, it may be, the absolute reality of the spiritual sphere, some mystic or devout soul opposes the fact of his own experience and the capacity of all men to rejoice in it, there is less readiness to welcome and pronounce this a sufficient answer; such experience, forsooth, is enthusiasm, fantasy, delusion, some disordered action of the mind within itself, not the clear insight, the living consciousness, of a divine reality. Scoffers and wits, and even grave philosophers, throw these mystic experiences away with the ghosts and dreams of obsolete superstitions; and possibly religious men will at least half join them in argument or sneer. Such the incongruities of human thought! A motion or an object of sense shall prove the substantial reality of natural forms and their movements, to neither of which does the sense bear any testimony, while prayer and trust and the visions of devout heroism shall prove nothing but illusion and reasonless ecstasy.

To what purpose is all this said? Such may be the secret question. The answer is ready. Every man knows there is a real existence apparent to us in the boundless forms of nature. As

surely, though many may sneer or deny, there is a real existence apparent to us under the boundless presence of spirit. There are deceptions and mistakes in the reports which sense brings us of nature; there are enthusiasms and errors in the visions which thought accepts of spirit. But nature is not less a fact, spirit is not less a reality. And spiritual existence, to say the least, is just as certain as natural existence. It were a waste of words to spend them in demonstration of an existence surrounding us; if our inner sense were as thoroughly exercised as our outer senses, it would be just as much a waste of words to spend them in demonstration of a grander sphere and order of existence transcending nature, pervading and quickening man and the universe. The demonstration, in fact, can hardly be other at any time than, as the word imports, a showing of the reality to the eye of the mind.

“But prayer, trust, the visions of devout heroism, just spoken of, these are only signs of disordered thought or bewildered affections.” Then on grounds as solid, we might proceed to show that all deeds and affections reaching into the natural world are signs of equal disorder and confusion. On this point, however, let us not dwell. There is a higher view. Prayer, if it be prayer, is itself emanation of a spirit into the

sphere of spirit. It is not a posture, it is not a word, it is not a form, it is not a modification of body or of nature; it is spiritual effluence and experience. Trust, the deep, calm, unutterable repose of the man in the bosom of the infinite mystery, — the childlike look out into the measureless universe, nothing presented to the sense, but the soul taking an inspiration as from a father's soothing presence, — this is as really a spiritual experience, — one fact of the spiritual order. The visions of heroic devotion may have sometimes given to the interior feeling an appearance of outward reality; but, to say nothing of objects, real or unreal, which they have summoned, one thing is certain: the visions themselves, even if illusions, presuppose a spiritual origin. They are sometimes spontaneous intuitions of the mind enamored by the infinite beauty; their spiritual fountain is then in the depth itself of the being. They may be sometimes the result of efforts to make real in one's self what are known as ecstasies of others; and in this case they testify the presence of a spiritual capacity, — a power itself bespeaking a high source, from which it must have proceeded. And as even ocular delusions prove there is an eye, and suppose also something for the eye to see, so do religious extravagances, spiritual delusions, prove that there is a spirit, and suppose

something in the universe for the spirit to receive according to its own laws and methods of reception. The caution in each case is, not to destroy, not to deny, not to neglect, the power or the organ, but to train ourselves to discrimination of the false and the true, of the delusion which plays off its tricks upon us, and the reality which belongs to the majestic and permanent order.

Thus, as nature is verified to us by one class of experiences, so quite as surely spirit is verified to us by another class of experiences. Let us add another thought. Nature, we are unable to doubt, existed before we were born, and will exist when survivors pronounce us dead, the same beautiful cycle which we see rounding out its forms and its courses. Spirit, the truth is just as questionless, existed before any consciousness of ours, and will exist when men see us no more on earth, the same ethereal presence which we feel in the inspirations of strength and of truth, and in the aspirations of prayer and love. So nature appears continuous, connected, one system; so spirit appears enduring, harmonious, rising into one vast sphere. The single soul may seem but a drop in the sea, but a bubble on the surface; the sea itself is infinite, and encloses every drop,—the surface covers an unfathomed depth, within which if the

bubble burst, every atom is only hidden, never lost.

The practical difficulty which meets men of believing tendencies and devout affections is the apparent distance of this mysterious sphere from human perception. We see, they may say, the system of nature. By day, the sun is out in fulness of splendor, and the numberless forms of earth dwell amidst its beams. By night, the moonlight calms the air and sky, and sleeps on field or forest or water, and stars stand out, indicating worlds upon worlds. But the sphere of spirit! We see no such thing; no sun, no moon, no star, no earth or sea. We try to look upon it; only one immense void, one everlasting abyss, meets our asking eye. It is as when we stretch our sight from the deck of a ship in mid-ocean; nothing meets it but empty sky and sea; nay, more, the void is such as we might dream if sea had no surface or form, sky no circle or color, an infinite vacuity.— When such doubt comes over us, let us gather our thoughts and examine the case, how it really is. If to the mind opened only on the side of the world, nature seems nearest and most real, yet to the mind once opened fully on the side of the spiritual realm, spirit becomes nearest and most real. The world, no longer all or continent of all, becomes a transparent medium of the crea-

tive light which contains, encircles, penetrates, the whole. But the power itself, the everlasting substance, of both the seen and the unseen, is always invisible. The very tree there on the hill-side, red with the gorgeous hues of this rich autumn,—who can tell those elements and powers combined, away from all perception of the five senses, which have worked through it so many years, through such changes of season, to bring it where it is now,—to constitute its very nature, to be the essence and ground of its growth and its whole form? That one red leaf, who can describe its internal history from the first green through summer to this bright October? The question goes deeper than the senses, and leaves the naturalist pursuing an entirely different course of observations. It suggests to us, that, after all, we know, we perceive of even the tree merely certain appearances within the compass of sense, not the mystery which makes it what it is, which lives and grows through it. But as much as this we are able to know, and the enlightened mind does know, of the grander, the pervading, creative mystery, the appearances, the developments, the fruit, as the Apostle terms it, of the spirit, its natural growth into the order of life and action,—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. As really as the fruit of au-

tumn expresses the power working into the processes of nature, so really virtue reveals and bodies forth the power working through the greater processes of spirit.

So much it seemed necessary to say, preliminary to our entrance on this last division of our topic. When we contemplate the person in himself and his relations to the material order, we scarce think of doubt; man is here with his wants, of which the greatest is Divine comfort. When from the person we go forth to contemplate society through its several relations, we have no more doubt: the wants are felt at once, happy when the supply comes in the presence of God. So far a childlike trust goes with us. The Church meets us as threshold, nay, more than this, in its whole significance, as temple itself, for worship in another form. An hour may come, to some it comes inevitably, when either the Divine consolation must die from their hearts, or another channel must be opened for it, another sphere revealed into which the soul enters, thenceforth seeing the presence of which it had earlier heard and accepted the tradition. We stand as yet but at the entrance. The realm of spirit spreads out to infinitude. The shrine of its worship expands and ascends and shines out to the opening eye brighter and higher than the sun. The Deep is before us;

and though no dark inscription repels us from the gateway, no hopeless sorrows threaten us if we dare to pass within, yet nowhere more than here, and through this entire process of the Regeneration, do we need at every step the strength and guidance from above. We are still partakers of the earthly nature, souls living in the form of the first man: and such as he, so weak, so ignorant, so sinful, we must essay to know and interpret the characters of the Lord from heaven. If so far we have striven to follow the Divine voice in our earthly relations, now that the quickening spirit is revealed, we are to strive, deeper within the new mystery, to pass into its own higher sphere, obedient to the greater word which it speaks, alive with the purer inspiration which it breathes through heaven and earth.

Let the celestial life of Jesus furnish the perfect symbol.



## CHAPTER I.

### LIFE FROM THE SPIRIT.

Behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, the virgin shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel; which, being interpreted is, God with us. — *MATT.* i. 20-23.

Thus the sphere of spirit descends into the realm of nature. The celestial inspiration quickens the second man, inbreathing the virtue through which he is destined to appear as the Lord from heaven. The Divine birth at once reveals the Father, introduces the Son into the world, and opens in him a higher and spiritual order of humanity.

The narrative has been so generally received in Christendom as statement of the literal fact, that we might pass over any reference to the questions which have been suggested. There is some reason, however, for alluding to them, chiefly to take occasion for presenting another

view of the subject. On grounds of reason applied to observation of nature, and of criticism applied to the records of the Evangelists, some in modern times have reproduced an ancient opinion concerning the birth of Jesus, which, we might almost say, the whole Church of all ages has repelled. The discussion of this question is of course irrelevant to the topic before us; but the reference to it illustrates a thought with which we may set out. Leaving the question of history still open to reason and criticism, we find in the doctrine of the Church a truth which criticism can hardly assail, which reason itself confirms. Think as men will of the human parentage of Jesus, he has furnished demonstration stronger than historical testimony to the Divine origin which constitutes him really, not figuratively, Son of God. Let us endeavor to make this position good.

We may begin with the remark that, as throughout nature there is a generic distinction by which all the kinds of existence are separated from each other and marked by their several characteristics, so likewise this generic distinction remains, permanent and unchanging, through successive generations. We are often reminded of the knowledge, seeming almost prophetic, by which the naturalist constructs from fragments of an animal body an outline of the whole. But

the same uniformity of nature which has taught him to predict the frame of the individual, authorizes him also to extend the prediction to the species, and to affirm that both parent and offspring have a kindred form and the same essential qualities. Nor does the principle limit itself to animal existence. It is the law prevalent throughout all nature. From the coarsest grass or weed, up through the finer realms of vegetation, to the richest trees of the garden or the loftiest growths of the forest, each kind perpetuates its qualities and forms, the old reviving in the new, the hidden power dropping former leaves and stems and trunks, but putting on kindred vestures evermore. Man illustrates the unvarying order, not in the permanency of his race only, but in the perpetuated varieties of tribes and families by which the race is diversified. And whatever anomalies or apparent contradictions to this law may be sometimes found, it is the presumption, amounting almost to assurance, not that Nature strays, but that man has failed to learn her secret.

Apply this principle of divine order to the topic now before us. Some one may say, By proving too much, it proves nothing. Say that a celestial origin ascribed to Jesus demands a celestial origin to all men, since he is marked, not by diversity of kind, but by superiority in

the degree to which manhood reached in him, we may reply, Grant it, if you please: allow such origin to all men, an essence bearing divine characters engraven in it, it is not the less true that this origin and essence appear conspicuous in him whom ages have pronounced Son of God. That the name is truly conferred, his life proves. That life was of other origin than aught which preceded its appearance among the Hebrews or the Nations. Nowhere among either of these divisions of men had the Holy Spirit wrought as in him. Nowhere had soul spoken as he spake of God; nowhere recognized, as he felt and confessed, the presence of the Father; nowhere breathed, as he continually breathed, such a vital inspiration of the everlasting sphere. Whether the deed he wrought had been done often before, or for the first time it came from him, in either case it was alike original, spontaneous, divine. Whether the word he spake had been uttered by prophets or others in earlier days, or now men heard it anew, still in either case it flowed out of depths in his own consciousness which we have right to proclaim spiritual and eternal. As each great hero in history reveals the heroic element in his nature, and we ask nothing but the fact to verify his power; as each high soul in speech or song gives out that which it is, and we ask no proof but the living

word, — so this son of man, if we repeat the designation by which he chose to mark himself, everywhere reveals the divineness of his being, the deed, the word, the life, not his own, but the Father's who was with him, his spirit in him and overflowing. When he exclaims, "I and the Father are one," if some may have insanely dreamed the like, some asserted it in arrogance, some in religious frenzy, yet falling from his lips, so humbly, so devoutly, with such clear and sound consciousness, we shrink never from the boldness of the word, we take it rather as the simple interpretation of the mystery of his nature: we rejoice to see God brought into such intimacy with man, and for ourselves are prepared to feel how blessed the later word which said, "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, unto my God and your God." Whatever indeed we can depict to ourselves as divine, — the boundless circulations and benignities of love, the everlasting radiance of wisdom and truth, the powers which move and control nature and bless mankind, those eternal elements of which nature and man are compact, — we see gathered in this majestic Form; beaming with heavenly brightness, out of the secular darkness, upon illumined ages; delivering with angelic voice, amidst a world filled with discord and hate, the word, which no time shall ever lose, of

the Father blessing his children; embodying, evidently as ever body comes and reveals, that same word as immortal image of the Unseen. And seeing him thus divine in very life and deed, we cannot repress the ancient confession, Truly, this man is Son of God. The offspring shows the parent, as light the sun.

Nor stop we here. The history of Christendom is full of dark pages. But the darkness is not of the Christ in it, but of the selfish, the sensual, the earthly, the infernal, with which the Christ still wars, as he warred of old; which, as power of darkness, his light rises to overcome and disperse. Whatever in Christendom is of the Christ, whatever derives itself from his life, his word, his spirit, his influence, is like him proved of God. So far forth as Christendom is Christian, so far it is Divine; it is the filial life of Jesus prolonged through generations and embodying itself in humanity. As the Father is in the Son, the Son in the Father, so the Son is in the true Church, the Church in the Son, one indissoluble type of the Divine Unity. The Christ, living immortal in the body with which he surrounds himself, and of which he is quickening head, is of God; whatever men may do with histories and criticisms, the devout insight, the spiritual reason, perceives God to be his true Father.

So soon as we reach this point, and contemplate Jesus, not barely as the solitary person, but as the quickening spirit to a new form of humanity marked by the generic characteristics of his own nature, we are led to the relation in which he stands to us. And as the precise aspect of that relation to which we are now directed, we contemplate his Divine origin, his birth of God, his life from the Spirit, as type of the human regeneration,—the descent of the spiritual sphere into the realm of our consciousness,—the entrance, in our experience, into the kingdom of God,—the eternal life revealed also within our souls. Except a man be thus born again, from above, he cannot, because he has not the elementary qualifications, see the kingdom of God.

The life in nature, we have already seen, is of itself a joy, though passing through many processes of sorrow. The life in the sphere of spirit, let it be added, is of itself a higher joy; but this also leads into scenes of trial, and has its very beginning in experiences which often seem fearful, rather than full of promise and hope. Except in those instances, apparently rare, in which the religious character appears like a first and natural growth, the commencement of a course originating in religious conviction, and proceeding toward the heavenly state, is marked by this

twofold conflict,—sin roused by the idea of good, and the feeling of impotence to do what the soul loves. Paul has described this conflict most perfectly, though with the peculiar formulas belonging to the relations of Judaism to Christianity. There is first the state of animal life, unapprised of any law higher than its own appetites and impulses. There is next the coming to the man living so carelessly, with such unconsciousness of a higher authority, of an imperative law, the voice which forbids him to indulge his own desires, which commands him to love and obey God, to love and serve mankind. This presence not only discovers the passions already dominant in him, but excites them to greater activity. The voice is powerless to bring him to obedience; his desires, roused into vehemence, bear him away whither they will, their reluctant slave. Sin lives; the man dies. This experience reveals at once the idea of a supreme good, and the attraction which draws the love, the will, the mind, toward it in spontaneous and earnest sympathy. But conflicting desires sweep over the soul, like so many floods: beneath them holier aspirations are oppressed and seem ineffective. What shall be the issue?

What shall be the issue? To determine this, we mark the end proposed, and the relations in which the soul stands to that end,—the birth



from God, after the type of Jesus, his life renewed in us, his spirit drawing us into the celestial kingdom, so that we too may know God as our Father. But selfish and sensual desires draw us down from such a height; what we would not, that we do, what we would, we cannot. The mind delights in the glorious vision; the will is unable to execute itself. There is nothing dreamy here, nothing sickly, nothing idly sentimental. It is the solemn, earnest, everlasting problem of man asking and striving for God. And wisely did Bunyan conduct his pilgrim from a region over which destruction seemed impending, through a deep slough, and beneath a mountain sending out flashes of fire and thunders from its overhanging sides, before he finds himself in at the gate, and the celestial path stretching upward for his disburdened and ascending course. With kindred wisdom, if he meant it so, the great mediæval poet begins his round in a fearful wilderness, in the darkness of the night, fierce beasts threatening him, thrown down even into the depth of infernal gloom, before he rises, led by blessed guidance, into the vision of Paradise.

What, we ask again, shall be the issue? The dark consciousness is told, not the passage out into light and peace. True. Perhaps the question cannot be directly answered. We may not be able to say what will come; we can say what

may come of the bitter experience. The Son of God hath lived, conquering sin, imaging his Father. Here is the example to encourage our effort. The Son of God liveth still, enthroned in heaven. Here the great promise to him who follows his steps. The everlasting Christ, the Holy Spirit, the secret presence of the Father, is near to us, and in us, even if we are unaware of it, for ever. And here is the power we need,— here the power which cannot fail us. After the conflict and the burden, extorting the bitter cry, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” the fervent soul, raised from depression to rapture, exclaimed, “The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” We need not wonder at the earnestness, sometimes seeming almost exclusive, with which Jesus and his Apostles pressed the necessity of belief in him; we need not censure altogether the exclusiveness, more really such, with which Luther and his friends urged faith as all in all. To these latter it was a fountain of consolation; it was a revelation of mercy, reopening the heavens and rejoicing in a Saviour and a Father; and to the first Christians it was the principle which elevated them above the imprisonments of idolatry and vice and darkness, above sin and death, into the perception of the Divine

Presence, of the celestial sphere bodied forth in the Lord Jesus and opened to the trusting spirit, of the Christ powerful now within us, as he was triumphant on earth, and fulfilling the great consciousness of the interior kingdom of God, as it is building up in heaven and on earth. Let us but truly believe in the name of the Lord, this shall be the victory; let us but truly welcome his spirit of life, this will enable us to reckon ourselves dead unto sin, alive unto God, in Jesus Christ our Lord. Born of God, we shall cease to be slaves of sin, and become sons of God. The birth of old in Bethlehem shall be the new consciousness of the spirit; and just as the life, the deed, the word, the nature, and character of Jesus, in himself and in his disciples, prove that truly God was his Father, so shall the life of Christ, the deed, the word, the nature, and character of Christ, reproduced in us, unfold to us our highest relation, and, even beyond our full comprehension of the meaning, teach us to exclaim evermore, Our Father!

If, however, there be those who, without such dark experiences, have attained the heavenly light, and live in abiding filial love and obedience, let them not turn their very happiness to an occasion of fear. Rather let them bless God, who has conducted them by easier and smoother paths. As they remember the secret attractions

which drew their childish hearts to the love of the Lord; as they review the course through which their steps, often felt to be weak and tottering, have been led and upheld; as they rejoice in the goodness which hath followed them all the days of their lives;—so let them accept the past as promise of the future, and wait in constant trust that they shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. Trust in him, obey his voice; he will not fail to open the heavens, to reveal his presence, his love, his peace.

Here then, and thus, do we begin our course through another department of human experience, its wants and its source of supply, the alternations through which it passes from its beginning in the mind, through its progress, not to its completion, which is reserved for an immense future, but to whatever we now know of its trials and their issues, its sorrows and their consolations. Looking on it from the higher side, we present it under this form, the sphere of spirit, embodied in Jesus Christ, reproduced in us, that with him we become sons of God. Looking on it from the lower side, we perceive it as the soul of man, rising in the strength of the Divine Spirit, through such experience as the end demands, to the life and the realm which it perceives as heavenly, wherein with the first dearly beloved it is able to pronounce God its true Father.

## THE PRAYER OF THE SPIRIT.

Almighty God, open thou mine eye to perceive the manifestations and the near presence of the unseen sphere. I would never turn away from anything which thou hast made, or call it mean. But in each and the whole I ask to behold the sight of thy being. Make the sun in the skies emblem of the fountain-light, and the skies themselves radiant with deeper heavens: make this air symbol of thy presence, which gives breath to whatever lives, and is source of all strength and action: make this earth, in all its products and changes, a voice, one amidst change, speaking of thee, proclaiming thy love, revealing thy laws: make the universe temple to every soul of the Holy dwelling in it. In man, O Lord, enable me to see thee, brighter than in earth and sky; above all, in the spiritual man, thine image revealed of heaven.

Thou didst create man in thine image; thou didst breathe into the earthly man thy breath of life, and make him living soul. For all the powers and capacities, for all the high deeds, the faithful lives, the fair culture, of the human race through successive ages, let thy name, O Lord, be praised. For thy greater promise fulfilled, let thy name, O Lord, be praised as never hath it yet been praised. For the image in

which thou didst make man, thy divine and eternal image, bodied forth and introduced into this world; for the heavenly man, dwelling in thy bosom and walking among men; for the quickening Spirit revealed in human person, so that seeing him we see thee, Father! for this, thy dear Son, whose name is exalted above every name in heaven and on earth, — we would raise the voice of thanksgiving, we would raise our hearts in sincere and perpetual love and joy. Blessed be thou for thine unspeakable gift.

Make us, our God, like thy Son. As we have lived of the earth, earthly, so help us to live of the heavens, heavenly. As we have been living souls, so quicken us into the life of the spirit. As we have borne the image of the first man, so reveal in us the image of the second man. As we have dwelt in this garden rich with thy gifts, so restore to us thine Eden of richer fruit, and enable us to receive its immortal life. And as we have felt our kindred to man and to nature through the earthly Adam, so teach us to perceive and to feel our kindred to the spirit in man and the spirit in nature through the Lord from heaven. Grant unto us consciousness of the birth from above, of the life from thee, the Holy Spirit coming over our souls and revealing the Christ in us, thy presence, thy power, and the fulness of thy peace. Amen.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE BAPTISM.

Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan, unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering, said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and, lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.—*MATT.* iii. 13–17.

JESUS has now lived through the several periods of infancy, of childhood, of youth, into early manhood, developing in harmony with the laws and the conditions of each age the essential elements of the nature bespeaking his intimate union with the Father. How far he may have been distinctly conscious of his life as divine, and whether doubts and perplexities concerning it had risen in his mind, we are nowhere told. The hour has come at last, however, to make the revelation clear, the consciousness full and distinct. Jesus presents himself for the consecration of baptism.

The first thing which offers itself to the thought at this point, is his earnestness to carry virtue to perfection. To the innocence and the aspirations of earlier and more retired years, he would add at their close the deed, only symbolic, it is true, yet full of significance, which should mark him as consecrated to the Truth and to God. Nothing which befitted him in the past seems to have been ever omitted; while he is looking for a new course of action, a grander development of his being, he would naturally feel the solemnity of his position, and, omitting nothing, if it be but an outward rite, which is of God, would hold himself as hallowed to the observance and completion of all righteousness.

The second thing which we mark is the consequence of an act so simple in itself, yet in him so full of devotion. We might wonder that the heavens should open now, rather than at some greater hour; that this should be the instant of the Spirit descending upon him, of the Divine Voice sounding to him from heaven. The devotee might anticipate the vision after long fastings and watchings, meditations and prayers; the philanthropist, after great toils and struggles and sacrifices for suffering men; and so, whoever has some special theory of virtue and devotion, after a series of deeds corresponding



to it. Why should it come with a deed so small as this? We might answer, No deed is small when filled with the spirit; the greatest deed — greatest in outward seeming — is dwarfish and shadowy when empty of the spirit. Doubtless, with many Pharisees and others, that baptism was a worthless and ineffective thing, perhaps an idle superstition, a hollow solemnity, a soulless mask. Just such with them would have been any prayer, public or even private, — any charity, however large from them, however useful to others, — any act of supposed virtue, let it be what it might. But with Jesus, such his fulness of divine life, everything which he did was alive and large and holy. With him thus baptism was the culminating act of a series rising to this height of an open consecration: not his own, he is hallowed in free service to God. And this first fruit of a devotion which had grown through the whole of his earlier age, this prophetic offering of a life destined to spend itself for the holiest ends, in obedience to the highest laws, penetrated by the spirit of the Father, is as freely accepted as it is freely given. Here is the great transition in the method of his living. A Divine virtue, privately nourished, showing itself only in secret, emerges from obscurity and silence; it gains consciousness of itself, and prepares to fulfil its larger destinies.

This sublime consciousness involves three things; whether they suppose any outward appearances, as of a parting sky, a descending dove, an audible voice, is not material to the purpose now before us. Let us just attempt to imagine something of what they were to the mind and soul of Jesus; something only, where we cannot think of such a thing as exhausting the ideas.

1. The heavens were opened unto him. The heavens, or skies, seem to have been regarded as the seat of God, the pure, sunny regions, wherein the pure Being, source of light and life, dwells evermore enthroned. Between him and us, these spread out into a firmament which hides his presence from our sight. So, while we transfer the thought from nature to mind, we conceive pure, celestial spheres stretching over and around us, bounding our vision, and concealing the Divine Sun, whose rays yet fall dimly down on the soul. Now whatever may have been the appearance to the bodily eye, we may suppose that, in this hour of concentrated and rapt devotion, the dimness and obscurity, as of an encompassing sky, dissolved before the soul of Jesus: the Divine brightness shined full upon him; the infinite glory spread over him, encircled him, filled him, as new day.

2. He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him. No more do we

need to settle the question of a bodily shape and a bodily sight. It is enough for our highest encouragement, that, in this opening of the celestial spheres, Jesus certainly saw with clear inward vision the spirit, transcending all forms of manifestation to the outward sense, coming down, as if it were a dove, emblem of the Divine movement, over his own waiting and obedient soul. The interior consciousness of the descending power is sure, even if the imagery should be deemed representative and symbolic.

3. The celestial revelation of the Spirit completes itself in the assurance of the godlike element of his being. The glory of God might have appeared as a distant splendor; the Spirit, coming down dove-like, might have brooded over him as a separate power; but the voice which accompanied the vision to the heart declares how near, how intimate, how essential, this vital presence to his own being. The true heaven is within; the Spirit of God is quickening essence to the soul; the Son perceives his life as everlasting inspiration of the Father, and rejoices in the love and peace which fills him. Lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

So through the fulfilment of all righteousness Jesus attained to the consciousness of the celestial sphere which he embodied, of the life from

God in which he lived. Let us accept the prophetic symbol.

Whether it be through secret attractions, or through dark conflicts, that any person approaches toward the Lord, what he perceives at first may be, not so much the presence itself of God, as the effect of that presence appearing perhaps undistinguished from what he considers his own actions and conditions. He is conscious of a power which controls his desires and harmonizes his affections; he believes the power to come of God, but may deem it impiety to think of it as God within. He is conscious of aspirations rising toward heaven, of influences coming over him to soothe and bless; he thanks God, but scarce imagines that both are of the Spirit dwelling in him. He loves God, and calls him Father, taught by the doctrines of Jesus and the traditions of the Church; he may have scarce dreamed that the Fatherhood is an eternal reality at the very centre of his being; that through the life of God imparted to him, he is becoming, as it were, perpetually child of the Supreme. He may live through a religious infancy and childhood flowering into youth; but the baptismal hour is yet future. Let him be true to the law which now commands him; let him press on, humbly, devoutly, trustfully, through the experiences, joyous or gloomy, which now

befall him ; a heavenly vision is drawing nearer ; it will reveal itself in the befitting hour.

Looking at the processes in an historical method, that is, as a series of facts in the course of life, we might consider them as appearing and succeeding each other in a way somewhat irregular and arbitrary ; at the best, those higher states granted as rewards to faithfulness in lower. As they used to crown victors in the games with garlands, and deem them happy thenceforth in their glory ; as they have always loaded heroes in triumphant war with the rewards of their deeds ; as they love to confer on aught which is deemed virtue some fit recompense ; so, looking outwardly and superficially to the religious character, we may say that the conqueror, the hero, the virtuous man, is exalted as if to repay his fidelity ; he bears his cross, so God bestows the crown. But going into more interior view of the same, we confess it indeed all of God, both the deed and the compensation, the whole proceeding, however, in the unbroken order of a divine life naturally developed from its own centre. The attraction of love and trust draws us ; that very attraction is full of sweetness ; that love, that trust, overflows with sweetness. Or the tumult of the soul is hushed in the gentle influence of piety ; that piety, that gentleness, that deepening calm, how full of peace, of bliss!

Such experiences may come to us, in proportion to our attainment, at any stage of religious obedience. Let us accept them with thankfulness; but let us not take them for final states, for the conclusions of a course which they rather encourage us to pursue. We may not foresee when or how, but these all, if but improved, are bringing us to the hour of a greater revelation. We have contemplated the majestic symbol. Let us come down to the level of what might be common experience. Drawn first by the secret power which moves us toward God, the soul, as it were, gathers all the past into the compass of its view, detaches the good from the evil, casts evil away with aversion, invites the good to heart and home, and in earnestness of prayer seeks strength to live for the future purely and truly. Perhaps in some solemn act, private or public, raised to such intense aspiration, the soul offers itself in unlimited consecration to Him whom it may have sought long, though now it may seem feebly and partially. Its single voice has now become, My God and my All.

The word may be pronounced without effect. The consecration may be written down, signed, attested with vows, yet nothing come of the whole. But the consecration completed in the inmost heart, and carried out into universal application to feeling, thought, word, deed, the

consequence is inevitable as the successions of nature. Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God. The baptized spirit comes up from its lowliness to see the heavens opened; to see the presence descending, as if it were some dove from upper air, and coming over it to quicken and bless; to hear out of the mysterious depth the voice which gives assurance of the Father's love. Henceforth the man, obedient to the great vision, walks in a new and broader sphere. What had been belief, becomes insight; tradition loses itself in the open aspect of the Truth; doctrines which formed a creed before, dissolve into transparencies through which the light of life streams; nature is radiant everywhere with divine beauty; manhood rises to his view from the earth and the realm of death, shining with beams of heaven, enshrining the immortal; and through the mazes of his own mind, he perceives the paternal love, a vital power, moving through them and elevating all to order and harmony. He understands Paul saying, "It is no longer I that live, but Christ who liveth in me," — Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God, and the mightier life and love of God. He understands what is the promise of the new covenant; and without feeling himself sent back continually to read the inscriptions on tables of stone, or limited to the

words which have been marked on parchment, he perceives the law written on more lasting monuments, the word which is very nigh to us, even in the mouth and in the heart. Of himself, of man, of nature, he sees, he feels, how blessed the whole must be, for God lives within.

#### CONSECRATION OF THE SPIRIT.

Eternal Father, I am thine, only thine, now and for ever. Enable me to gather myself this hour into one great and baptismal act. Enable me, putting everything evil and false aside, to unite every feeling, every thought, every element of my nature, every power and aspiration, into one undivided deed, one symbolic consecration to thee, Supreme and Holy One. Help me so to present myself before thee as once thy Son presented himself at the river Jordan, and so to partake of his image and life, that in my measure I may fulfil and perfect righteousness. Here, O God, I am, not mine own, but thine; not of earth, but of heaven; seeking to live, never to self and earth, but only to heaven and thee. In the vision, dim as it hath been, of my higher birth and my heavenly relations, I behold, brightening now, that which draws me to the unseen spheres; I come, not willing to disobey the vision, unto thee, Great Being, to consecrate this one hour as prophet of my whole future course.



Forbid that this word I speak should come soulless from the lips. Forbid that this solemn deed, which I strive to fill with great purpose, should pass from me shadowy and fruitless. Grant unto me, Lord, thy life, thy power, thy light and love. Fill me now from thyself.

Father, thy child am I, consecrated to entire and perpetual obedience. Thy laws, revealed evermore of heaven, I receive for life and guidance evermore; unto them, not unto the impulses of passion, not unto the maxims of the world, I would submit myself always in all things; assured, that with thee, Eternal, they were never born of time nor shall grow with our ages old, and that, as thou art, so are they for ever holy, pure, divine. To thy will, whether in prosperity or in adversity, let me bow with perfect acquiescence; knowing that, whether I perceive its grounds or not, it is one for ever with infinite reason and goodness, and hath no other issue than the highest order of thy wisdom. To thee, Lord, let this consecration hallow me wholly and for ever.

All strength is of thee. Thine the aspiration which my heart now breathes forth; thine the power in which alone my prayer can become my deed, and the purpose of this day can be prolonged into the course of a life. Thy heavens which open now, let them shine on me with

their light, and pervade me with their influences for ever. Thy spirit, which cometh dove-like upon me, let it rest on me for the future, and quicken me with immortal power. Thy voice, which speaks thee my Father, me thy child, let it sound into me through the whole of this life on earth, through the eternity of thy being. I am thine, O Lord; be thou my God and my All. Amen.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE WILDERNESS.

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the Devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the Devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again, the Devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the Devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him. — MATT. iv. 1 - 11.

THE sphere of spirit, forming a life of its own kind, wherein the filial love rejoices in the Father, opens such a fountain of bliss in the heart, that we straightway think all trial over, and, if any sorrow come, it must soon be lost in this excess of joy. But the thought mistakes, not the

fact only, but the very law of existence. We have seen already the life of the person in nature out of its very elements of happiness evolving capacities and actual experiences of infelicity. We have seen the same life in society, deriving from its purest and sweetest affections necessities of bitter separations and sorrows. And now that we come to such beginning as our earthly experience enables us to understand of the life in spirit, we perceive it first as a principle of celestial bliss; but as we trace its growth, we find it in harmony with the laws of the other sphere, containing in its very constitution powers, often becoming states, of abandonment and temptation.

Men have raised many questions regarding this story of the temptation. Of these we can say nothing more than is necessarily contained in one or two suggestions. The first regards the scene and circumstances of the retirement, whether, as described, they were local and outward, or inward and visionary. For this question, we need scarcely say more than ask, When will men learn that the inward, even if what they call visionary, supposing the vision real, not fantastic, is as actual, as surely true, as the outward and local, supposing also the place and the fact real, not fantastic? Take these words of the Evangelist, interpreted literally to the

mind contemplating them according to sense and nature, and there is no difficulty whatever, so far as drawing a picture of the wilderness and the persons and the conversations is concerned. But bring in other considerations, drawn from the narrative itself, drawn from reason, from philosophy, false or true,—then historical and other difficulties press upon us. As yet an intellectual solution of the suggested problems may not have been reached. What then? Is the whole insignificant till the solution comes? By no means. The spiritual fact stands,—fact, not idea; not mythic or parabolic, but real, absolute fact. Of necessity the divine life in man on the earth undergoes—let us mark the very word, undergoes—states of experience such as these. Let it be imagined, that, to the eye of a second person looking upon Jesus, there was no change of place, no departure from the bank of the Jordan, no entrance into a wilderness, no solitary weeks of fasting, no coming of a tempter, no standing on a pinnacle of the temple, no ascent to a high mountain, no angels ministering,—suppose all this, and what then? To the consciousness of Jesus, the processes in the spiritual sphere were real facts, necessary conditions, whereof the local and personal circumstances furnish the methods of setting them forth to the soul which interprets the Truth by

the form and the shadow. Nay, while there have been some who thought it even unworthy of Jesus to be tempted, let one person at least declare his conviction, not only that Jesus was tempted, but that he could not have been Jesus truly such without temptation. The manifestation, that is, of a life like his, proposed as a fact to become real on earth, the experience of a wilderness is presupposed as a necessary condition. Even the ideal construction of a Christ must be imperfect without it. As the mathematician calmly pronounces his theorem true, numerous as the facts which seem to contradict it; so the Christian may say with the same calm assurance, Do with the story what you can, the Christ went at all events into the wilderness, and came out, tempted and unharmed. This is necessary truth.

Here we stand above the region of criticism and questions, amidst the lights of a spiritual consciousness instructed by the sure experience of the Christ formed in the soul. Beneath, men may contend long, fiercely, bitterly. What then? These conflicts may be overlooked from this calm and sunny height; and however men may finally settle — and may we not trust they are continually settling? — the historical and intellectual difficulties, the eye quickened by less clouded vision sees the Christ evermore renew-

ing the demonstrations of his own life and power.

The topic which invites us now presents three divisions, the solitude, the temptation, the angelic ministry. We may glance at each.

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## SECTION I.

### THE SOLITUDE OF THE SPIRIT.

When the evening was come, he was there alone. — MATT. xiv. 23.

OTHER events and other thoughts than accompanied the baptism had by this time befallen Jesus. But there was one resemblance. They made him alone.

Let us recur to the former passage. Something is lost of its force by cutting it off as we do from the history of the baptism. Jesus had lived thirty years; but he had never entered any wilderness, driven by such impulses as to make it memorable and sacred. The culmination of his earlier experiences, expressed in the visit to the Jordan, introduces the vision of the Holy Spirit. This, the mind judging of it naturally, might have been expected to impel him at once to some public and great work. Experience of new power excites us to put it forth in new deeds. Insight of truth fresh and alive to us

turns at once into desire to impart it. After such a vision, one would at first say, Jesus must have inspiration to declare what he had seen. To Nazareth, there to cheer his neighbors with the mighty word, or to other villages of Galilee, we might look to see him go; possibly to Jerusalem itself, in the capital of his country to speak of its redemption. Personal impulses, perhaps, suggested these or the like directions of his course. But personal impulses are all put aside; his it is to live out the life of God, to obey the Spirit of the Father. That Spirit leads him for greater issues into the wilderness. The Spirit, wiser than man's thought, prepares him for the mystery of his destined course, by the twofold process, isolation from men, exposure to infernal influence. He is led into solitude, and led into it to meet temptation of the Devil.

Really this is the perpetual process of the Spirit. Here is a strange paradox. In itself a very movement of love, it yet seeks after loneliness. Rather, in the wonderful revelation of the Supreme Being and the celestial state, it draws the heart up to devout and silent contemplation. The world, society, business, the common talk of men, study, all external things, are intrusions. Night, silence, the forest, the lonely walk, such accompaniments and helps of prayer and contemplation, are welcome; the farther we can



enter into depths of seclusion, the nearer we seem to dwell in the Divine communion. It is the character of all great thoughts and profound emotions: they ask to be left alone. The time may come when the soul shall seek after men to tell the vision, to renew and diffuse the life which it has gained: at present, solitude and silence are sought and are needed.

There is neither hate here nor pride. The Divine Beauty dims all inferior lights, and fills the whole heart. But there is another influence, which, contrary as it is in nature, yet conspires to a similar result. The world is soon found to bid the spirit a cold welcome. Sin is in itself repulsive. Let the soul go forth from the vision of the baptism to report, as in childlike simplicity, what has been to it such a bliss. The reception given to the story will not be felt as invitation to repeat it. The more thoughtful will pronounce it a wild dream of enthusiasm; the unthinking will catch up the word, and echo it long and loud, in heartless and piercing sneer. Men of traditional piety will shrink from it as irreverent innovation; those of no accredited piety at all will gladly flatter their own irreligion by the authority which fears the fresh inspiration, and will applaud a reasonable devotion in words which truly signify contempt, or at least neglect, of any real aspiration. Bad men, of

course, are unready to hear the message of the Lord; good men fear to what it will grow. So whither shall the spirit go for sympathy and response? Just imagine Jesus to have gone, not to the wilderness with the wild beasts, but to Jerusalem with the tamed men whom it contained. The Scribes, studious in the law, the Pharisees, praying in the corners of streets, the Sadducees, with their weak faith in spiritual existence, the proud, sceptical court of the Roman Governor, and a people looking up to these higher classes as models of wisdom, of virtue, of devoutness,—think of the answer which his story would receive. Later we find hints of it. The Jew knew that God spake by Moses; but whence is this man? The Roman might preserve national dignity and pride, laughing in his heart the mean while, as he referred to the divine nights and divine communications of Numa; but this Galilean youth,—to talk of seeing the heavens open! From such contemptuous indifference or bitter sneer or careless scepticism, how natural that the devout soul should retire into solitude, musing in itself, nourishing inward strength, and waiting for the wings to grow!

Nor without temptation even in solitude. Temptation indeed begins here. Only when the spirit has developed itself to the conscious-

ness, can it recognize the presence of temptation. The joys and the sorrows of the person in himself, and in his relations to others, can hardly be considered as furnishing temptations, until there is a principle, a life, a power, unfolded, of which the temptation is to make trial, which it is to call out, to exercise, to prove. So soon as this period is reached, so soon as the man is conscious of the eternal law, the Divine Presence, the immortal element within him, and the mysterious destinies which await him, he is not only borne by the new spirit into solitude as of a wilderness, but brought thereby into the midst of trials belonging to this higher order of his existence. He may not abide for ever in the celestial vision; nor yet, in the isolation of the spirit, deepened by the unbelief and contempt of men, dwell in unbroken peace in the wilderness; he has been born again, he has been baptized into the everlasting name, not to revel in a spiritual banquet, to waste his greater energies in fruitless contemplation and wonder and delight. God designs for him a nobler course, a more glorious destiny. The worldly hero, the champion of a nation, the man whose natural prowess shall grow to the strength of the victorious warrior, may never waste his time or his powers or his opportunities in sloth and luxury: he must up and be doing and bearing. The

greater hero, waiting for manifestation as child of God, must toil, strive, suffer, be visited with sore temptations, that through conflict he may win victory, that through weakness he may be made strong.

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## SECTION II.

### THE TEMPTATION.

Now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations. — 1 PETER i. 6.

THE severe kindness of the Spirit has urged the Son of God to the scene of temptation. We may still overlook the historical circumstances and questions, and proceed directly to consider, so far as we can, the secret and necessary processes. Let it be said, moreover, that, in examining the threefold series, we must carry with us all along the double confession, that our understanding leaves much in the meaning which transcends our thought, and that, in what we seek to interpret, we may yet fail of the truest significance. With such caution let us begin and proceed through the whole.

Let it be remembered at the first, and kept constantly in view, that, so far as we are able to judge of the mind of Jesus, it must now be

characterized and filled by the sublime consciousness, I am Son of God, most dear to my Father. That revelation is enough surely to furnish thought and prayer and earnest questions for his lonely hours and his long fast. At the same time, natural laws exist and operate in him, and natural appetites, suspended, as it were, perhaps, for a while, by the spiritual wonders sustaining and exciting him, must reappear at length, and, unsupplied, produce faintness and pain. Herein is origin, so far as we give it a mere historical interpretation, of the first trial in the series. We may be pardoned, if with reverence and self-distrust we venture to put into words of ours something of what we may believe to be the feeling of Jesus:—Son of God! No less than this am I declared to be; no less do I feel myself, in the divineness of my thoughts and aspirations. Yet hither am I brought, into the barren wilderness; here am I left to famish with hunger. Son of God! And hath not he power over nature? Sure the elements and forms of things around me must obey the voice which hath come to me, which is destined to go forth from me, and to produce divine effects. These stones at my feet! They are innutritious now, but the Son of God must be able to change their qualities, and make them nourishing. Perhaps this very deed may be test

of my character, and approve me Son of God. — If this view be correct, then in this suggestion we perceive two elements, an excited appetite, which furnishes the occasion, an impulse, not accepted indeed, yet an impulse to religious distrust, — an impulse to doubt, after all the grandeur of a celestial revelation, unless verified by such an external assurance.

The impulse is resisted. The lower appetite is hindered of gaining the ascendant over a higher faith. The want is borne, the trust in God stands unshaken. So things are changed. For appeal to distrust, appeal to presumption is substituted. Instead of attempting to translate into our words the impulse, as if it existed in the mind of Jesus, we may rather give a paraphrase of the words ascribed to the dark tempter:— Son of God thou surely art; I perceive it, and thou canst not be driven to doubt or distrust. Thy very want does but awaken new confidence, and so draw thee nearer to thy Father. Thou livest, sure of his protection, though stones turn not to bread, though food comes not to thee here in this desert. Be it so. Thy strength is great, thy security no less than Almighty. Doubt never thy security, shrink from no peril. The promise of thy Father, question never its fulfilment. Nothing can harm thee, Son of God! Through want, thou wilt not

famish; think not that danger will put thee in peril. Thou wilt not accept aught for thy life but the word of God; trust that word, and cast thyself down from this pinnacle. God's angels surely will hold up his Son.

The Devil is permitted to make trial of Jesus; but the true Son will not make trial of his Father. Jesus is tempted; but he trusts God too faithfully to tempt him. So far the tempter is foiled. Another resource is left. The Son of God is destined to supreme dominion. The very idea of Messiah suggests the thought of royal greatness; it recalls the memories of the Hebrew heroic age, when the nation was yet free, when priests spake unquestioned oracles, and prophets uttered the will of the Lord, and, in unison with both, kings anointed by their hands conquered hostile armies and established peace through the land. Such shall be the new Messiah; first, redeemer, then monarch, of Judæa, sitting upon his throne for ever. Conceive now the tempter according to such as probably were the Jewish thoughts. During those ages he reigns over the nations, the power of darkness, but predominant still, and through foreign tyrannies enthralling even the boasted people of God. Thus we may give expression to the final attempt:—From the height of this mountain thou seest the kingdoms of the world and

their glory. All these things are mine; do me homage, and I give them unto thee. Just fall down and worship me; thine are all kingdoms, thine is all power on earth.

Neither to gain the highest and broadest dominion will the lonely man submit himself to aught of evil. For God alone his worship and service are reserved. His answer rises into stern and effective repulsion: Get thee hence, Satan. And the series is closed; the Devil leaveth him.

So for a season, if need be, we too are in heaviness through manifold temptations. It was an affliction in the Apostolic age to suffer persecution through its several degrees, terminated in the loss of all things; the suffering became temptation, as it operated on the minds of Christians to shake the strength of their belief, or to withdraw them from the honest confession of it. Thus it tried, brought to the test, justified or disproved, the sincerity or the determination with which they adhered to the new revelation of the Father and the eternal life. In the same way, though persecution through direct action of political power has now generally ceased, yet the occasions are not wanting in which social relations, and even political, we might add ecclesiastical, are none the less really temptations. Established doctrines in the Church, predominant sentiments in the commonwealth, sects



and parties in both, the relations of our friends to each, our family connections predisposing us or rendering us averse to them,—all the numerous and subtle influences reaching us from every side, may serve, as they often do serve, first to forestall our own investigations, next to mislead us when we begin to search for truth, and after all to repress the freedom of our confession, the fidelity of our lives to our convictions, even when we have attained something of internal clearness. Against argument we can stand, perhaps, unmoved; but there are two things less easily resisted, contempt of the world and sorrow of friends. Even from contempt we can partially shield ourselves by seclusion from the world, if seclusion shall seem manly and honest; but to remember the tears which our parents may shed over our supposed apostasies, the regrets, mingled with censures, of our dearest friends, and the disappointments of the churches supposing us to have swerved from the faith and counting us corrupters and destroyers of other souls, is less easily escaped, besides being harder in itself to surmount. The true Christian may be half tempted to accept the general verdict, imagining that he really is almost, if not quite, infidel, or at least heretic. Multitudes, we may fear, are in fact overpowered by such temptations, either suppressing inquiry, or wilfully re-

pressing conviction, or declining the results of acknowledged faith. The sympathy of the world outweighs the love of God.

Or there is a direct onset made of the world and its appetites upon the spiritual realm with its affections. If any man love the world, saith the Apostle, the love of the Father is not in him. The hour comes, and it is not seldom, when the world rouses and puts into forceful action its several lusts, those vehement desires of something outward, sensual, selfish, against which nothing can stand effectually but the holier power from the Father. There is the lust of the flesh, the excited appetite, as of hunger, thirst, and others pertaining to the body; there is the lust of the eye, the restless desire for conspicuous position, for public show, for such a false splendor as the dream of angels supporting the form of Jesus in its descent from the pinnacle of the temple; there is the pride of life, exulting in wide and imperial dominion, such as the tempter sought to waken in the soul of Jesus by the prospect from the mountain and the promise of a kingdom. Pleasure, wealth, power, promised for devotion to these ends; suffering, poverty, weakness, threatened for postponement of them to the higher aspiration;—such is a very common alternative brought before the mind for choice and decision. The sphere and

the life of spirit may be surrendered; the consecration and the visions of the inward baptism, the secret promises and immortal hopes, may be suffered to fade away from the soul; and, to escape the losses of a piety which the world repels, a man may let the higher go for the lower, and make the world his god and his hope. Or else, and blessed he whom Divine love empowers to sacrifice himself, he may choose afflicted truth rather than exulting error, and hunger and thirst, and dwell alone in want and obscurity, far from pomp and pleasure, amidst dishonor and weakness, his Saviour with him, in preference, all unforced, to any, were it the very highest, elevation from which God is absent. Let none hesitate here. The lust of the world, the Love of the Father,—in whatever form the question comes between them, let the scene of the Judæan wilderness be renewed; let the word of the Lord, the order of his providence, the stern repulse of devout virtue, drive evil off with all its deceptive promises, and leave the soul open to the higher presence.

Besides these temptations and resistances, there are others also somewhat different in their character. Men may become our tempters; our own desires may seduce us from the upward path; faith, hope, love, are conquerors of both. But other conflicts and other victories are before

us. We might imagine to ourselves a soul, living still as essential man, severed from the relations and appetites of the body, something as we conceive of those who pass from the present state of life into the future mystery. The soul we depict to ourselves, alive, in spiritual form; the life of course having its own affections, qualities, needs, powers, — capable of sin, capable of holiness. Take now the history of the temptation as symbol of possible trials to this living soul, this spiritual man. Then transfer the delineation to the man still in this body, who, through the higher life and attraction, is rising into the heavenly state. How may we interpret it?

The two former of the temptations directly concern the life — the spiritual life, let it be remembered — of the person whom they assail. The spiritual life is a reality too, not a shadow, something substantial, something, moreover, preserved, strengthened, quickened, by supplies analogous to those of food. For the bread of life, a stone may be received; for vital power, a dead show. Let the man beware of receiving aught other than God's own word, the living, quickening inspiration of the Truth coming evermore from him, his life inbreathed into ours. Then, conscious of the reviving energies and inspirations of God, we may be called to employ

them rashly, needlessly, for ostentation, for display. A secret distrust of the power may tempt us to try the wings which it fills and expands, to soar and fly unbidden, so that we may be sure the Lord has not deceived us. Let the soul trust calmly to God, leaving to him the ways and the seasons of confirming his promise, tempting him by no distrust, presuming on him by no rashness, following in simplicity the method of his own providence. If the spiritual life also might expire by starvation, so may it be destroyed by disobedience: it is preserved only by the Truth truly received, by the deed ordered into harmony with it.

The third of the temptations may be considered as summit of the series. Still dropping from our view the material forms, and contemplating it as an address to the man in the spirit rather than in the body, we may deem it the suggestion of the self as supreme, — that atheism of the heart in which the man seeks to possess all as from himself, to rely for all on himself, to make the chief end of all himself, thus in homage to evil withdrawing worship from God. The life which flows from the Father as the Source, which derives nourishment from him as the Truth, which lives harmoniously with his order as the Law, repels such suggestions in the instant. It worships the Lord from the very

element of its nature ; him only, such its inmost essence, can it serve. As, in the parable, the sheep heareth not the strange voice, so cannot the celestial man hear this stranger call, but turneth away from it ; whereas, if the Good Shepherd is seen, — and where is he not seen ? — not only do we find comfort from his rod and his staff, but inspiration from his voice as he goeth before and calleth us, and we follow him in lowliness of obedience.

All this we may refer to those seductions which draw us away toward what is recognized as direct sin. There is another aspect of inward trial in our times, as probably in all times, but brought into greater prominence now by reason, among other causes, of the peculiar scientific direction which mind for these last centuries has pursued. It is not so much religious infidelity, as intellectual scepticism ; nor yet the sceptical indifference and contempt, asking what is truth, only to cast a sneer, or to tell how little an answer is sought. The heart, indeed, in the case before us, is more believing than the head ; the soul may love what the mind cannot prove ; the affections outrun the intellect ; the good man would fain believe, but he knows it false to compel credence beyond evidence, and either his aspirations must be disordered, or his beliefs maimed. He cannot bring them to accord.

The state, painful as it must be, is quite natural. The earliest belief is traditional, the last is perceptive: between the two there is a necessary passage. When one has arrived at the period in his experience which opens to him the immediateness of his relation to the spiritual realm, — which at least assures him that he is a new man, whose faith must be his own, not another's, whose hope must live of some other word than man's, whose love must be growth of some deeper life than earthly parentage imparts, — then, if he do not abandon religion wholly, then, if he still seeks after God, he must go through the wilderness: the valley — none is darker, for God himself seems fading from his view — spreads out before him, and the path lies through it, nor can he see the end, whether it emerge into a boundless paradise, as some say, or pass deeper down, as it seems, into an unfathomable abyss.

What shall he do? Some assure him this course of doubt is all of evil, and only leads to greater evil. They have nothing to prescribe, but, as he must on, he just carry with him and hold fast the lamp which they give him; while he follows this, all is safe before him. But they forget that this is his very doubt, whether the lamp is really lamp, lighted by celestial fire, or rather some meteoric ray kindled in these very shades, out of the low damp marshes, a fine show going

before him for real illusion and a lure into utter darkness. What shall we say then? First of all, let the devout inquirer take comfort in the assurance, that doubt is itself a sacred thing; not wilful unbelief, not equally wilful belief; but the sincere, genuine, pious doubt of the soul asking for truth as the hungry man for bread, as the traveller in Eastern deserts for water. Let no such man crush out the growing life, put down the doubt by force, repel the question as some evil demon. Let him accept it, let him welcome it, let him follow it through. Taking no meteor of either tradition or fancy, no pre-script of the past, no dream of the present, no phantom of either deceived credulity or blinded unbelief, let him descend, led by the Spirit, into the nether darkness, and see what it hides. They have told him always of God, and he has been glad to believe his Father is in heaven; perhaps they were mistaken, he feels; and asks, Can their belief justify mine? I can no more believe through their thoughts, than I can see through their eyes. It is an utter gloom; no God! But to believe and trust in illusion is worse than that. What I want is the Truth; not error, though I err with Plato or Fénelon; not falsehood, which belies and degrades my understanding with its gorgeous hues, though showing fairer and revealing larger pomps than the sim-



ple daylight which gives things as they are. Or the Being of God may be to him too clear for doubt; but he cannot perceive the certainty yet of the Christian revelation. Prophecy, miracle, Scripture, inspiration, genuineness and authority of the Gospels, the nature of Jesus Christ, the reverence due to his Apostles, — subjects like these may come over his mind like clouds, and spread darkness, no light. He may huddle up all these difficulties as into one lump, and just thrust them as a disagreeable thing away from his thought, or rather, as is sometimes said more expressively than elegantly, swallow the whole: be sure, it is the worst infidelity; he can trust neither God to justify himself to the mind, nor mind to interrogate the forms in which God reveals himself to our insight. It is the wilful purpose to hold up the oracle as divine, before we have suffered the question to be searched, whether the god spake it or a devil.

Even when the mind rests in its belief of God and its understanding of the Scriptures, so far as these beliefs have been attained, there may be remaining doubt. These manifold, often contradictory interpretations of what God hath spoken to mankind! Catholic, Protestant, Greek, Oriental heretic, Western dissenters of all shades, Augustine, Pelagius, Calvin, Arminius, Cranmer, Knox, Wesley, Swedenborg, Ed-

wards, Priestley, — who can tell half of them, their sects and their contradictions! What now! Bless God there have been so many to tell their thoughts; accept from all so much as is seen to be true; dismiss what is seen to be false; wait for what is yet to appear of light and truth breaking in from every side. Take no stone for bread; but live of every, be it the lowliest, word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Cast not thyself down from the pinnacle of the temple, trusting that angels will bear thee up in their hands; but when the Lord leaves thee famishing in the dry, fruitless desert, stay where thou art, trust his care, and let him send or withhold his angelic ministries. Consent not to falsehood or evil, though for kingdoms; but if it be to leave thee still alone, sad, darkling, tempted, full of doubts, overspread with clouds, reserve thy worship for God, serve only him. We need not say, All will yet be well; the want is, that we leave everything to the Lord, without inquiring concerning the future; that we serve him, without prescribing as condition that he shall make up for our losses and pay for our services.

## PRAYER FROM THE WILDERNESS.

( §§ 1, 2.)

O thou mysterious Power which hast brought me thus from light into darkness, from the heavenly vision, as I thought it was, into the dreariness and gloom and temptations of this earthly desert! I look up to the heavens and see them shut, I wait for the Holy Spirit, but no dove comes. I listen for the voice from the heavens; there is only silence above. Thou Spirit, that hast urged me hither, into this solitude, whence art thou? — what thy meaning? Thou dost not answer; thou hidest thyself from me. Clouds and darkness are round about thee. Thy day has closed; night covereth thee, — shall it be for ever?

Yet, O God, if still I may believe thou art, my Father as I so lately saw thee to be, rejoicing in the love which thou declaredst to me, O Lord God, I would not yield my trust. Clouds and darkness are round about thee; those heavy eclipses I feel in my heart. Let me still believe, O mighty Being! Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of thy throne; help me to trust thy mercy to preserve me, to restore the tokens of thy presence, to remove me from the power of this darkness. Nourish me now with the heavenly manna, the true bread, the word which proceedeth out of thy mouth. Inspire me

with perfect faith in thee, seeking no sign, offering to thee no temptation, but calmly trusting and awaiting the revelations of thy will. Raise me above all the splendors of the world, that everywhere and only I may worship thee from the lowliness of my heart and in the deepest obscurity of my condition. Drive from me, far off, all illusions of evil, all infernal powers, all spiritual wickedness; and grant, that living in thee, Holy One, I may grow to thine image, and prove myself child of God.

I have solemnly consecrated myself unto thee, thou God of the spirit. Suffer nothing to pollute the soul devoted to thee. Suffer nothing to seduce me from obedience to thy laws. Nor, O Father, even amidst the desertion and depression of an hour like this, do thou leave me to repine, to complain, to doubt. Not my will, but thine, be done!

Thou, Lord, art high above all the earth: thou art exalted far above all gods. Enable me still to love thee, Lord; still to hate evil, and to repel it wholly from my heart and my hand. Preserve thou my soul, that I may be holy to thee; deliver me out of the power which cometh up from beneath, to make me captive and sinful and wretched. Sow thou light even for me; sow thou gladness in my soul. So will I rejoice in thee, Lord, and give thanks at the remembrance of thy holiness. Amen.

## SECTION III.

## ANGELIC MINISTRIES.

From this time forth ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man. — JOHN i. 51.

WE need to proceed no further in notices of the Hebrew conceptions of angels, such as the Scriptures report them to us, than simply to say that they demand nothing like our modern thought, a distinct order, or series of orders, of beings higher in nature than man, dwelling in heavenly abodes, their several ranks holding what may be called a sensible nearness to God, and sometimes going forth as conscious messengers of his word. This thought may be true, or may be false; but it is other than the primitive Scriptural conception. According to that, the angel may be, not a created and distinct agent, but any form in which, visibly or spiritually, through dream or vision, when we wake or when we sleep, the Divine presence is discovered to us, and messages are borne to us from heaven. Be it higher orders of minds or elements and powers of nature, or neither of these, but celestial forms revealed to eye or spirit, to the Hebrew mind it might be angel of the Lord. Hence the ministries which succeeded

the departure of the tempter from Jesus are to be considered as those of consolation and strength, services which he needed after fasting and conflict, from the Supreme Father, not the lower offices of any subordinate creatures, however highly exalted. Through whatever media the communications may pass, the media are angelic, the communications divine. Heaven had been opened to the consciousness of Jesus, that is, the unseen, not unsubstantial, sphere of light and love and peace; an answering love had risen from his heart to the Father; the Holy Spirit had rested upon him, and through the solitude and trials of the wilderness darkened by infernal power, had proved his fidelity to the great revelation. And out of the open heaven, from the Spirit of the Father, in this hour when obedience is triumphant, the body weakened, nature perhaps almost prostrate, fresh inspirations penetrate his soul, and God is felt and seen to be with him in forms and methods of benignant service.

There is no reason to suppose that the essential element of any experience in the life of Jesus ever failed him after once it revealed itself within him. The whole vision of the baptism, so far as it opened his communion with the Father, may be considered as thenceforth, not an old memory, but a permanent consciousness.

The scenes of the wilderness, not of course in their sufferings and trials, but in the spiritual powers which they roused and in the elevations to which they raised the soul, above all unbelief and sin, into the serene realms of trust and holiness and filial obedience, are thenceforth enduring, we may say, perhaps, immortal. So too the crown of all, the communication of strength in this new service, outlasts the hour: angels continued thenceforth ministering to him; variously indeed, as changing states needed, but never withdrawn. He was constantly in heaven, not alone on earth; he was in the bosom of the Father, even when men saw nothing but the lowly form, suffering sometimes, always earthly; and voice or angel which might sometimes arrest the attention of those about him, came not for his sake: the voice sounded evermore through his soul, and the heaven within was filled continually with angels of the Lord. The Father was in him, he in the Father. And so from this abiding consciousness he could exclaim truly, not, as our translation erroneously reads, "Hereafter," as if it were something reserved for the future, but, "Henceforth," as the present fact, from this time forth, "ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." So does the universe bless the filial soul, proving its love and its truth!

Angelic ministries attend thus on the Son of God. But there is more than this; their presence and their offices are seen of his friends; so he tells the disciples. We can hardly take his meaning in so low a sense, as that now and then, in a few instances at the most, they should see forms, called of them angels, wherein he should gain strength for some great work, or consolation in some heavy sorrow,—a mere outward, transient ministry. Higher than thus may we deem of his word:—A reality of Divine power, such as angelic appearances shadow forth to the eye or the imagination, a living, substantial communication from the Father, shall be henceforth perceived with me; not an occasional boon, not a superficial glory, not a service of heavenly companions, but a permanent, profound, intimate revelation of God, never withdrawn, always uniting me to him.

Nor stops it here. The life of Jesus is reproduced in his disciples. The spirit of the Son of God continues with all who recognize and worship God as the Father, thus becoming themselves sons of the Infinite. That is, the filial character, of which Jesus is the great type, remains as the precise distinction of regenerate humanity for ever. Thus is Jesus immortal in the soul and the history of mankind. And thus over him, wherever his life appears, angels de-



scend; the ministry reaches as far as the spirit which it serves. To the Christ formed, or forming, in us, God is near, as to the Christ tempted and victorious in the Judæan wilderness, to the Christ sorrowing in the garden, or coming forth from the open sepulchre. Let us be true to the Divinity which not only shapes our ends, but shapes the means which work them out, and which, if we hew but roughly the material of both, provided our endeavor be sincere and faithful, will certainly form them into perfect smoothness and everlasting harmony.

There is a stern destiny which forbids anything ever to stand still. From Nazareth to Jordan, the visionary processes there, thence to the desert, the forty days and forty nights passing irrevocably by, the temptations, the divine ministries which seem to round the circle. Up to the hour which thus introduces the Son of God into the heavenly sphere, all is movement toward this grand issue. Now perhaps we may think it is time that he should rest. Not so. This consummation not only comes of a past; it goes into a future. When the growths of a summer have risen into the ear, then the ear rushes on to be ripe. To drop all metaphor and analogy, as the youth grew from God to the strength which conquered evil, thus winning the heavenly peace, so the Son of God, neither hasting nor resting,

is now to go forth, to serve as he hath been served, to find in the world another wilderness, to fight in public as he has fought in private, to conquer new foes of God and man, through a severer baptism to fulfil a more complete righteousness, through the victory which death yields to lead sinning and sorrowing man to his Father and his heaven.

With steps all unequal we may try to follow him who hath left to us the path so radiant with light brighter than the sun. Falter as we may, slow, toilsome, loitering, as our step may have been, still on and upward. If to the solitude, so lonely, so sad, full of fastings, full of watchings, has succeeded even an infernal vision, and the power of darkness hath tempted us through strong appetites and gaudy shows and imperial ambitions, through doubts now clouding all vision, anon brightening all illusions, through fears and hopes alike deceptive and ruinous, let us venture to count it all joy. Through such depths the first-born Son of the Father arose above all height; through such depths the soul learns its wants, its weakness, and the power which alone can lead and cheer it, as it rises with the Lord. The darkness is but of the hour; the hour passes, and angels descend; the new ministry from heaven begins, but never ends. The divine elements of the new life, gathering

so long, compact through such pressures, drawing us by their everlasting attractions to heaven, remain unimpaired for ever. Nay, their strength and beauty continually increase. But they may not grow sluggish by inaction. If they reveal heaven to us, they command us also to the world, there to establish the silent idea in the prolific deed; to live out among men the spirit which hath come to us in our baptism; to be speakers of true words, doers of just works, not only when such works and words may meet a welcome, but when they shall insure against us fierce wrath, sneering contempt, bitter hate, aught of hostility which appetite or passion or pride may rouse to assail us. God sends his angels, not to minister to our sloth; if we are slothful, they leave us: he sends them to impart the light and strength in which we may strive to bless the world, and work with God to replant this earth with the trees and fruits of Paradise.

If sometimes it has been difficult to frame words for the living soul in its sorrows, for the quickened spirit in its temptations, so likewise it is not always easy to translate the joys of the one, the victories and the peace of the other, into what may seem fitting phrase. And here I am reluctant to obtrude any private speech, which might disturb the holy rest of the univer-

sal spirit. There are, however, those Hebrew Psalms which have served us already, so ancient, so devout, so full of experiences which each age renews; and, with some changes of language, and some additions which the past thought suggests, one of these may be repeated as full of triumphant thanksgiving:—

O Lord, I bless thee for the new vision and the angelic service. The clouds are scattered, the darkness is fled, thy light shineth. Thy foes have departed; thine angels are come. Bless the Lord, O my soul! and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

O sing unto the Lord a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: thy right hand, and thy holy arm, hath gotten thee the victory.

Thou, Lord, hast made known thy salvation; thy righteousness hast thou openly showed in the presence of them who, knowing thee not, have sought to subdue the souls whose trust is in thee.

Thou hast remembered thy mercy and thy truth toward the lowly and the tempted, empowering them to resist evil, and to overcome: all those who love thee have rejoiced, and will rejoice, in thy salvation, O Lord our God.

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing

praise. Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills be joyful together before the Lord.

So comest thou, Lord, for ever, to judge the earth: with righteousness thou judgest the world, and the people with equity.

From the brightness of thy presence evil fleeth away; before the light of thy countenance the pure in heart rejoice and serve thee for ever. Thy children trust thee, Lord, in their weakness; thou redeemest them from evil, and sendest evermore thine angels to minister unto them. Lead us, we beseech thee, though it be through lonelier wilderness and more dark temptations, into deeper visions of thine overshadowing spirit. Amen.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE GREAT LIGHT.

Leaving Nazareth, Jesus came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea-coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; the people which sat in darkness saw great light: and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up. — *MATT. iv. 13 - 16.*

MANY centuries before the appearing of Jesus, Isaiah spake this word of comfort to his afflicted countrymen. Over their land he assured them that an invading host from Assyria should spread itself like a flood. Still, in the midst of fear and darkness, God should be with them, and a brighter day should rise. The passage referred to in the Gospel, as given by a later translator, reads thus: —

“The darkness shall not remain where now is distress;  
Of old he brought the land of Zebulon and the land of Naphtali into  
contempt;  
In future times shall he bring the land of the sea, beyond Jordan, the  
circle of the Gentiles, into honor.  
The people, that walk in darkness, behold a great light;  
They who dwell in the land of deathlike shade,  
Upon them a light shineth.”

Without investigating the principle upon which the Christian Apostles, themselves Jews, and their contemporaries who believed the Prophets and the accomplishment of their words in Jesus, either grounded their judgment or proceeded to prove his divine dignity by means of these ancient oracles, we may say thus much at least. The Prophets saw the Divine Presence in every deliverance and every blessing granted to their nation. Those oracles in particular with which this passage is connected bear, as we might say, for their watchword the majestic phrase, turned to a significant personal designation, GOD IS WITH US. And if ancient darkness disappears, and for contempt there is glory,—if over men walking or dwelling even in shades like those of death, a light, a great light, shineth,—this is but effect and manifestation of the present Divinity. Just so during those later centuries of depression and servitude, just so now he whom his disciples accounted the destined deliverer and king of a subdued nation hath appeared upon earth, among the people whom he was to save and govern, he bears to their thought the character, his person is symbol, of the same Divine Presence. This is the majestic form of God with us.

The idea is perpetuated in the Church. Through all Christian ages, Jesus has appeared,

in one method or another, the expression of God with man. To many he has been the second person in the Godhead, whereof the Father is fountain; to some of ancient and modern times, no other than the Divine Soul embodied, informing human nature, ascending into glory one with the Father; to such as have not been able to accept either of these views, he has yet stood forth as the man full of the Holy Spirit, so near to God, so faithful to his word, so penetrated by the celestial influence, so obedient to the Father, so benignant to mankind, bearing a commission so exalted, and speaking and living so completely in the name of the Eternal, that they confess and feel him to be not less than his Son and Image. But in either of these views, the latter quite as really as the former, we see how natural it may be to transfer to this one acknowledged and glorious expression and form of the Unseen Presence, images and representations of the same Presence in other, if less, yet analogous historical instances. Thus, if once a child, set forth as gift and pledge of deliverance, is named by the Hebrew phrase which we translate God with us, how natural that the Hebrew Christian should transfer the name to one acknowledged and honored as real and everlasting Redeemer, Christ the Power of God and the Wisdom of God! Equally natural, that, as he



read of old oppressive darkness removed, by the divine gift of light and peace, from the lands of Zebulon and Naphthali, he should apply the description as over the same lands he saw the greater light shine, revealing the Father and opening heaven. If as logic it may be powerless to us, yet as symbol it retains its truth and beauty.

We may proceed further. Besides the historical parallel, there is the natural. As the Lord God is truly sun, the sun as centre, life, and light of the universe, so whatever comes of him, the least and the greatest, the protection of a man or a nation, and the redemption of the world, is light, some ray from his infinite fulness. And as we rise from one degree of irradiation to another, from the lowest form of nature through the realms of growth and life, of thought and action, in the successions of the ages, what shall hinder our accumulation of all we can gather to brighten our conceptions, and to illustrate the whole realm of spirit? Thus Nature and History, seen on the higher side, shall for ever show to us something greater than the superficial fact. Above and through the clouds which both raise shineth evermore the Great Light.

## SECTION I.

## DISPERSION OF THE DARK.

From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. — MATT. iv. 17.

No human eye saw the processes by which sun or stars grew from the first rudiments to the fulness of beauty with which for ages the one has crowned our day, the other adorned our evening. Nor are all the processes given us in the course of the grander spiritual formation. Some of them appear in the record, however; and the whole may be illustrated, though but imperfectly, from the consciousness which we reach through experience of the Divine revelation in our own souls. Hitherto the whole thought concerning Jesus has regarded what we may reverently call the formative process. That process, in one method or another, went on through his earthly life; but after he leaves the wilderness, it ceases to be predominant in our contemplation of him. Thenceforth he seems to us, not the growing man, but the perfected prophet; not the private person, but the image of God to mankind; no longer the crescent orb filling itself with beams from above, but the great light, all rounded and full, whose rays can never cease to descend on all below, to spread

in full circle throughout the immense sphere of spirit.

But we must turn to another side. The old proneness to relapse into the idolatries of the surrounding nations had now for some centuries given place among the Jews to a superstitious and bigoted worship of the One Being whom they regarded as supreme, and in whom they contemplated the patron of their own, as a favorite, nation. Moses they concur with undivided voice to venerate as the grand leader, Abraham as the first father, of this people of the Lord. To the Roman Cæsar, a foreign despot, a worshipper of other gods, they have become subject, with the tribes and nations of the East and the West around the whole Mediterranean Sea. Both their national pride and their religious worship revolt, however, at the degradation. An outraged faith and an oppressed power combine to rouse all their passions, and to give to thought and action a corresponding direction. The highest hope to which they look, is restoration of the theocratic commonwealth; in this restoration, victory over their oppressors and enemies, for themselves a final triumph and supreme dominion. Hence their type of Messiah, whom we are told they had waited for so long, and whom they thought John or Jesus might bring to them in his own person. No idea here of a celestial

state, a spiritual communion, a city of God; the coming age should be opened, they thought, by a leader investing earthly elements with a heavenly splendor, renewing to the future images such as gathered about the heroism of David and the riches of Solomon. Thus Jewish dominion, imperial in a king enthroned of the Almighty, is the great object of ambition. To this central idea, religion, virtue, everything, must be subordinate. So religion, as already said, is bigotry and superstition, if sincere; otherwise, hypocrisy. Virtue has become theatrical, a mask of illusive selfishness, worn over the composed face which covers the corrupt heart; the entire life, while it is open, a procession of pride and sensuality and all low, base passions,—while concealed by fraud and cunning, a scenic representation, fair and showy forms put on to hide the real deformity and inward pollution. Such the dominant character of the age.

To which add this one other thought. Suppose the men of that age personally better than they were; suppose the Sadducees to have been believing and devout, the Pharisees sincere and virtuous, the Scribes to have obeyed the law which they studied, still all this would not have filled the new prophetic idea. A great transition is at hand. A new creation is approaching. Law and psalm and oracle are retiring before

the higher voice from heaven. This world, this epoch of human order, is destined to dissolve; a new world, the higher epoch of divine inspiration, is coming. Moses and the Prophets testified, not the permanence of their own institutions, but the fulfilment of their promises in the kingdom which the Lord should finally set up, to break in pieces all other empires and to continue for ever. The holy city, Jewish symbol of secular power, must itself fall; the very temple, symbol of the theocracy and the worship, — not one stone in it should be left on another, all shall be thrown down. The New Jerusalem shall descend from heaven. The tabernacle of God shall be with men. Not Judæa only, but the whole earth, shall rejoice in the Great Light.

In such an age, to such men, sunken in sin so deep, the very law which defines their highest conception waxing old and vanishing, what word so fit, so full at once of warning and of hope, as this? Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Abandon your personal sins, your national prejudices, your bigotry, your superstition, your evil lusts and deeds, all your false thoughts and fears and estimates of things. Leave, moreover, this whole outward and secular order; enter into the inward and spiritual realm. Such the word, calling from sin to holiness, from error

to truth, from nature to spirit, from the world to the kingdom of God.

The word speaketh still. The light shineth through those depths of darkness which remain with us. Worse than Assyrian invasions overflow our souls; deeper gloom than covered the scenes of old prophecy gathers with sin and falsehood around and within them. So much greater the light shining into us; so much purer, brighter, more divine, the presence which proclaims God with us. The grand history reappears in each regeneration of the person, answering to the regeneration of the world, and the progress of Jesus to the fulfilment of his destiny. No sooner does the Christ within us complete the circle of a more secret discipline, than this circle begins to revolve in a larger orbit. And on the other side, the whole old Judaism lives still in the heart, only with changed forms and names. Sadducean unbelief and indifference, Pharisaic superstition, bigotry, and pride, soulless literalism as of the Scribe, are extant in our society and our hearts. We have our national ambitions and prejudices, our lusts of dominion, our bitter prejudices of tribe, of class, of nation, of party, of religious sect; and with us sometimes virtue ceases to be reality, and becomes seeming; our fasts, if we keep the name, may be feasts of passion, our prayers heartless and

profane, our charities plots for reputation, all good deeds seemly without, within void of soul, empty shows, hollow masks. Only the light of Christ, the outshining of the divine sun, reveals the hidden or neglected abyss. Only the word of God, making its shrine within us, declares how false the self and the flesh, commanding us to crucify the lusts of both, and turn to the Holy One. Only with this dispersion of the dark do we perceive the breadth and the depth of that vast chasm which severs the domain of sin from the Divine kingdom, and therewith the greatness of the transition by which we must go from the tyrannous realm continually holding us back by its seductions, over the dreary way to the better country wherein freedom and righteousness dwell.

The more dreary that way, the more feeble our power to pass it over, if still we continue subject to the outward and imperfect dispensation. The language is so nearly obsolete, it sounds so strange and distant, that we may fail to interpret and apply it, when we read Paul speaking of bondage under the law, the oldness of the letter, and other the like phrases. Translate them into modern dialect, they are full of meaning and application. Even now Judaism exists under other name. Moses may be called Christ; the Law may have taken the gentler

name of Gospel; Christianity, such the epithet which covers the whole religious development of the age, may be rather the aggregate of Jewish thought, modified by Grecian philosophies and ethnic traditions, gathered about the primitive message of the Apostles, the motley form baptized into the higher name, and welcomed as the very substance which it has, if not displaced, at least distorted, oppressed, obscured. And just as, in the Apostolic age, Judaism, as a religious form and exercise of the flesh, must be put aside as inconsistent with the freedom and dominion of the spirit; so now this same element, under its other names and forms, this servility to the flesh, to the letter, to the creed, to the institution as a set whether of doctrinal opinions or of ritual observances or of moral precepts, must be supplanted by something higher, truer, more substantial. The shadow must dissolve in the reality; the type must rise into the living and quickening power; the flesh must give place to the spirit; the letter and the creed must vanish before the soul consciously communing with Him whom no word can define, no belief exhaust; and all the revelations of Law and Prophets must become enduring ideas and energies in the mind, the laws of the Eternal, no longer sought in outward characters, but felt as vital activities in the undying soul.



The spirit which formed nature and man, and which is the truth in Scripture, the image of God in his Son, must be sought as the interpreter of each, as the sole power which can separate us from sin and elevate us to holiness. Other methods, as has been suggested of the old Judaism, being processes of the natural elements, will be found to strengthen them, even when they develop themselves in forms of earthly selfishness; this only makes us free from the bondage, free from sin, free from fear, strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. A man may cast away religion and virtue wholly, both the form and the spirit; this is to plunge himself into outer darkness. He may welcome the divine reality, the spirit which always knows its own form; this is to rise into the sphere and the insight of the Great Light.

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## SECTION II.

### THE DAWN.

Seeing the multitudes, Jesus went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: and he opened his mouth, and taught them. — MATT. v. 1, 2.

As Jesus is represented by another Evangelist embodying the Divine Word, so we may

take each of his words as expression or symbol of his whole being. So when we follow him out of the silence into his open relations with men, from the wilderness where he was alone to the mountain where multitudes surrounded him, we see but the divine form in changing states; and, as the solitude presented the living word defending itself from hostile attempts, so now the same word goes forth to assail and overcome the very realm out of which temptation comes, to supplant the infernal darkness by the heavenly dawn. And in both and in all, let it be kept in mind, each word, each silence which is also word, is not something abstract, detached as it were from himself, but Jesus himself speaking, Jesus speaking the word which he bodies forth, breathing out the silence which reveals him. Or beyond even this. "The words which I speak unto you," he declares, "I speak not of myself; but the Father which dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." So let us accept the words, not only as forms of the living Christ, but as utterances of the Eternal, as the Father communicating himself in these voices, one in themselves, divided for our hearing. Thinking of it in this way, we may take the Sermon on the Mount, and in it see and hear, not the distant echoes of a fugitive voice, but the near presence of the living Spirit, the Son still quickened by the Father, the

Father still dwelling in the Son, who continues through the ages to open his mouth and teach us, if we but gather about the mountain, listening and obedient.

There is no low thought of chiding and reproach in any the severest of the words which he ever spake. Surely there is none here. At the same time, we may understand his words, as we understand himself, better by the contrasts which his time, perhaps this very multitude, presented. There are the rich, exulting in their wealth, envied and honored as lords of the earth. There are the prosperous and mirthful, who scarce dream in their joy that solace may be wanted ever. There are the proud and violent, overrunning sea and land to multiply their possessions. There are the unjust, still prevalent through their injustice, wanting nothing, having all. There are the great and the mighty, feeling little of mercy which they have never sought in their experience of a power which subjects multitudes to itself. There are the noble and the hero, the emperor, the king, the governor, the priest, and those who through birth or wealth or other means are in affinity with them, approached only with deference; and even if they suffer from each other, they know nothing of obscure and unregarded persecution; theirs is the splendor, theirs the renown, of warlike en-

terprise upheld by hope of lofty deed and large achievement. The world is full of such examples. The Hebrew conception of God's own promise and Messiah takes them in as images of the coming age, the destiny for which it waits in proud impatience. And, as we have observed earlier, there is a religious virtue, an honored righteousness, making itself conspicuous, corresponding at all points with this selfish aggrandizement and splendor. Put each beatitude by the side of such earthly felicity, each declaration of the truth by the side of such outward semblance, each interpretation of the Law by the side of some prevalent perversion, each precept by the side of some irreligious or religious disobedience, and mark how pure and bright the word shines through the near contrast. Mark then the conclusion of the whole; how beyond the highest existing rule or model of excellence the disciple is introduced to the opposite sphere, the righteousness of God; with what calmness he must soothe anger, with what strictness control appetite, with what simplicity speak only truth; how meekly he must suffer injury, how sincerely he must love his enemy, how unconscious must be his charity, how secret and silent the filial love of his prayer, forgiving all as he hopes to be forgiven; in all his actions measuring his duties to others by the

experience of his own needs. Mark how, when the word finally ceases from the ears of the astonished crowd, it ends in the solemn demand of each, that the deepest and holiest idea become substantial in the very life and deed and speech. How sublime the utterance from that Galilean mountain! how divine the word, how great beyond thought the life, one and complete, of which it was expression from the lips! And who, drinking in the sweet and heavenly inspiration, goes forth to live as the Teacher spake, as the Christ lived, how bright the day born in him of the celestial light shining inward!

Between the thought now before us and that suggested by the preceding section, there is so much similarity as to show that really dispersion of the dark is one with the entrance of light. The night goes off when the dawn comes on. The precise view sought, however, in the former passage, is of evil and error abandoned in the transition from the worldly state to the spiritual; the view now sought is of the spiritual in itself, the Lord in his own glorious form illumining mankind, drawing us by the divine attractions of his speech to himself, that he may make us like him, pure, holy, just, gentle, true.

For this holier dawn, for new and mightier utterances from the mountain, our time and the soul of this generation are waiting, earnestly, if

it be not seldom unconsciously. Worldly men may talk of the inefficacy of moral and religious truth; scoffers may sneer at devout trust and humble prayer and silent waiting on the Lord; the timid may feel as if the destinies of the world tremble when some brave word is spoken, some deed of heroic daring done; and if we suggest the coming of a new era, the approach of a higher dispensation, multitudes of religious men apprehend nothing less than some impiety in the presumption. Let us not essay to meet either in his own way, with his own weapon; neither the worldly with the retort of contempt, nor the scoffer with sneer, nor the timid with fear or with recklessness, nor the traditional and dogmatic believer with opposing tradition or dogma. But amidst them all, let us cherish in our hearts a firm religious trust, believing in God and his universal presence and his boundless love; let us maintain a calm, unmoved serenity of spirit, sure that the Father will justify himself to his children, and impart to them blessings greater than their thought; let us know, that when the temple of an old dispensation falls, so that not one stone is left upon another, it is, not to destroy worship, but to re-establish it, and to open the ground for a holier shrine and a nobler priesthood. Nay, we may believe the divine process so complete, nothing

wasted, nothing lost, that the fallen stones and the crumbling ruins shall themselves be saved, and in their season be wrought into the structure in which men shall gather for new communion and immortal service. It becomes us in these times of mingled darkness and light, the night passing off, as we trust, the dawn coming on, to stand, not with unbelievers and scoffers, not with the proud and ambitious, the worldly and the timid, the superstitious or the sceptical, who neither revere the old nor hope for the future, who only dread every portent of change; but with disciples and believing souls, with the humble and lowly, the spiritual heroes and prophets of all ages, the devout and trustful, and to welcome with them every word of promise, every ray of light, ready to draw and drink continually from the wells of salvation.

I have heard men say to the younger man enamored by some new vision of the Truth, This is well enough for aught we know, thus far; that which thou seest may be Truth. But beware; we see not whither it will lead. See not whither it will lead! if it be the Truth of God, ye surely cannot see so far as this. And no living soul stays to ask. Enough that it is the Truth; let it lead down to nethermost depths, that soul sees and must follow. Suppose when the words of the Christian dawn fell

first on ears listening by the mountain, John had said, or James, or Peter: "These are glorious words: our scribes speak nothing like this. Surely man never spake so, such divine truths, with such majestic tone,—words sweeter than honey from lips seeming touched with the spirit of love and power. But, really, we know not whither they will lead us. They certainly will lead us away from the world and from the Synagogue." We may bless God that such as John and James and Peter accepted the new prophet. Whither the Truth will lead! Be sure, to trial and toil and suffering, to contempt from the world, to the enmity of the Devil, and to the cross. And unworthy the soul which is reluctant to go that dreary way, lighted by such radiance, cheered by such morning promise. Let us wait also for the Dawn!

Let us wait in the spirit of obedience, and in unceasing prayer to the Lord:—Thou, who hast brought this great light into the world, scattering the shades of night and gladdening all eyes with its ascending glory, shine, we beseech thee, into our hearts, into all hearts, that we may behold and walk in the everlasting day. O Lord God, thou art the true Sun; awaken the children of men that they may rise to meet thy course, assured that their light hath come, that thy glory is risen upon them. Father of our Lord Jesus



Christ, thine is every word which hath blessed this earth; call forth anew thy children, that they may see thee revealed in thy Son, that they may hear thee once more speaking through his holy voice. Call thou the poor and depressed in spirit, that in the vision and the voice they may be raised up, and become rich in righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Comfort thereby those everywhere who now mourn; give to the suffering and meek their promised inheritance, this earth which is thine; fill the hunger and thirst of those who famish under the dominion of injustice and wrong; reveal to the merciful thine infinite mercy; purify the hearts of men, that they may see thee; enable them to make, as well as to love, peace, so that they shall be seen and acknowledged as children of thine, O God.

Nature is full of thy goodness. For all, thou hast made this beautiful earth, and spread out these wide waters. Over all, thy skies are stretched; thy stars, thy moon, and brighter sun give forth their light. Around all, thou makest thine air to flow, thy vapors to rise into clouds, all elements and powers to gather. Thou, Father, makest thy sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendest rain on the just and on the unjust. Inspire the hearts of men with kindred love and universal benignity; that whether

they receive kindness, they may be thankful and return sweet affections, or if they suffer unkindness, they may requite evil with good, or even persecuted, they may not only rejoice to be counted so worthy, but forgive and bless those who pursue them with wrong. Help us all, lowly children of God, to be perfect, even as our Father in heaven is perfect. So shalt thou bring to an end persecution and war and oppression and all unkindness, supplanting them by thy spirit of love, by the harmonies of thy living order, by the divine communion of souls become one in thee.

O Lord, we wait for that blessed day. Thy prophets have called us to hope for it. Thy Christ hath promised it in the brightness and beauty of his life. Thy spirit within us prays evermore for its coming. Speak, O Father, once again by thy Son upon the mountain; gather the world to hear and obey thy word. Amen.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE OUTGOING OF POWER.

John sent two of his disciples, and said unto Jesus, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and to the poor glad tidings are proclaimed. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me. — *MATT. xi. 2-6.*

NEVER more than in the obscure courses of the regeneration do we need strength, guidance, comfort, from above. Here we walk, alone, the darkness near us, on the confines — only these have we reached — of the vast spiritual orb, as on the shore of some great sea whose everlasting roll we hear amidst the silence and the night, as we stretch our sight toward the depths and the heights asking a light to reveal the mystery. We greet the first birth of sunshine in the far and clouded east; we welcome its growth, as the clouds pass, and the heavens are opened; and if they gather soon again, hiding the Divine form, we can rejoice the more as the great light shines, dispelling the dark, and making the dawn

sure and clear. The old Judaism is still with us and in us, shadowy, fleshly, perishing; the world that then was continues still to be, filled with real vices and unreal virtues, with sensual irreligion and unspiritual religion, with traditional worships and wilful unbeliefs and heartless mockeries. Names have changed; things remain. There is no hope for us but in the Christ, the presence and image of the Father.

Quite unlike, we may be told, is this sombre and heavy description to what we were earlier showed. The delineation then was all sunny and lightsome; nature, the whole and the part and the process, all good; man, a creature of glorious powers and affections, the fairer child of a fair earth growing toward his celestial perfection and destiny. Now, forsooth, nature is black, and man all but outcast. And in very fact this statement, though shaded and exaggerated, is shade and exaggeration of a reality. Could we imagine man in nature, possessing all which he now possesses of capacity and social attraction and happiness, this one element withdrawn, the religious aspiration;—nature left, the infinite and eternal sphere so closed that he has no more perception or feeling of it than appears in beast or bird or fish in the dark water;—he might have so much of mind as there can be without even the capacity for divine faith, so much of soul as

there can be without inspiration of heavenly love; then at once we should grant the absence of this higher element a mere limitation of his nature, not darker, not worthier of disapprobation or sorrow, than the same absence in lion or eagle or swan. But that the religious element, existing inmost and deepest of all in our souls, is suffered to lie dormant and as if it were dead; that the aspiration for the boundless and endless should be suppressed by low, narrow, temporary pursuits; that man, formed to live the eternal life, should subject faith to sense, and spirit to flesh, and God to the world, and for immortal love should choose the perishable things of selfish lusts,—this is the burden, and the whole of our sorrow. God has made him child of his own; he has gone from the Father, and made himself child of evil.

The dark fact takes us another step in our course. The Christ on the mountain is a glorious vision, speaking as men never spake, translating into words a life which is no other than the light of the world. But as in his private development he must transfer the whole growth of his being up to the grand consciousness of God in himself, into the victorious encounter with the Devil in the wilderness; so likewise in his public service he must transfer the whole power of the truth with which he took the ear and the

heart captive, into equally victorious encounter with the demoniac or other resistance which he meets among men. Man was created originally to subdue the earth and to govern the animal tribes by which it is inhabited; that is, to be a higher power than nature, bringing the laws of a greater sphere to bear upon the processes of this inferior order, and so to make the whole servant to reason. Jesus fulfils the original destiny, giving us man in dominion over nature,—man stilling the winds and walking on the waves, turning water to wine, feeding multitudes with the few loaves and fishes, and, whenever the divine reason would, not destroying or suspending the course of nature, but introducing into it the power of a higher sphere, to which it yields ready subjection, which it serves as with cheerful co-operation and harmony. Nor into nature only does this power reach. As it comes into relation with man, it reveals the same supernal and swaying influence; never indeed violating the freedom of his activity, never invading the sacredness of his moral and religious capacity, never inflicting—this would contradict itself—any the least evil, but, as men need a boon, imparting it through the divine virtue which made his word an energy, which rendered his touch a cleansing, and which went through the very hem of his garment to heal and strength-

en. And, moreover, as there were diseases in that day which men deemed other than infirmities of nature, so saw they these also give place to the Son of Man. The Jews ascribed them to demons, actual beings combined under one controlling power, their prince. So have most Christians believed. But the belief is passing away; many referring them to natural derangements, some to malignant influences proceeding from infernal sources in the spiritual world, though different in character from what the Church has commonly thought. Be they what they may, this is no question now before us. What we have to observe is simply this: that as over nature and man the Divine supremacy is revealed in the Christ, so whatever in nature or man, or in the realm of spirit which envelopes both, is found evil and destructive, he stands forth as the power and the name by which it is subdued and removed. A hand less than the infection might take the leprosy by the very contact; he touches the leper, and not only remains clean himself, but communicates cleanness and health to the separated sufferer. We look pitying and feeble on the sick whom we cannot relieve; the Son of God gives the quickening life. Whatever may be the malignity which men have pronounced demoniac, such the word proceeding from the mouth of God through his lips, he

whose pure love repelled the selfish power from the wilderness is able anywhere and everywhere to drive it off and overthrow.

Gladly we accept the prophetic symbol. Perhaps the Christ may yet, in ways and times we cannot predict, reassert those imperial powers over even the ultimate states and forms of nature and man and spirit. Whether so or not, there is a greater work which he surely performs wherever he is received, and by which he blesses men above all outward ministries. There are vices so leprous that men cast the victims out from their society, and spurn and loathe them, the victims loathing and abhorring themselves with a deeper and sadder aversion. There are vices, again, which men account infirmities, and regret rather than reproach, the sinners knowing themselves enfeebled, sunken, degraded, enthralled; they would gladly be better, but they cannot move of very weakness. There are vices, the world sometimes applauds them as virtues, whose victims may deem themselves creatures of destiny, driven on by some overmastering impulse to deeds, sometimes denounced as selfish tyrannies, sometimes proclaimed as sublime heroisms, which overwhelm the world, nations, families, men and women, with unutterable distress. The light shining from the mountain reveals these different orders of human sin, reaching down into the fathomless abyss.



All light is creative; as all creation involves these two processes, which, as we have already seen, are yet one essentially, — dispersion of the false, introduction of the true. The light is creative. Behold its type in nature. How does each morning bear in the rays which it spreads over all things the power which revives them, and calls them forth to their several activities! How does each spring — another name for the light coming back, from other regions which it has gone to bless, to these realms of winter and cold and death — renew with us warmth, life, an unfolding creation of growing and living things into the annual round! We give many names to things and their courses; really they are the entrances and departures of the still, creative, quickening light. So within the spiritual sphere, that seeming hidden realm in which man's life exists, out of which man's life derives all the elements of its good, and from which it has its character of religious or irreligious, human or bestial, godlike or demoniac.

We break up the moral diseases which surround us into parcels, contending against each as if it were single, independent, derived and nourished of itself. And, moreover, we divide off sins as of the heart from those of the outer deed, and individual sin from social, political, ecclesiastical. Whereas in truth sin as such is

one, the man contemplated in his relation to the law of perfection, which he bears in his own soul without fulfilling to the height of the great idea, so making himself slave to appetites which he ought to govern as he governs aught in nature. We look at the hosts defending, and the hosts besieging, a Sebastopol, and forget perhaps the meaning of the deed in the grandeur of the movements which cover it. Call it the cavern within which robbers have sheltered themselves, and now fight in desperation against robber clans combined to dispossess them. Every one exclaims: How false and uncharitable! Wherein? Robbers are men also who have their virtues and their heroisms,—become obsolete now. These Russians, Turks, French, English, are men who have their vices and their meannesses, only concealed and covered with the shows of splendor,—destined, if ever the Christ cast out the demons, to become obsolete in their turn. Then go back from the beleaguered fortress or the beleaguered robbers' den, and find the secret fountain of this fierce strife, the soul of which this is body. The Sebastopol is within us; within us, these warring hosts; within us, the whole battle is waged and gone through. It is selfish pride, grasping ambition, rapacious covetousness, taking shape, putting on armor, marching in firm ranks, destroying and defeat-

ed. It is proud men and proud women way-laying, circumventing, assailing each other in the bank or the shop, in street or parlor, in envious detraction, in biting sarcasm, with hard or contemptuous sneer. I have seen the waving of the victorious flag, and heard the shout of the triumph which resounds over England and France, and I have seen the dispirited fugitive and heard the saddened voices of Russians despoiled of town and fleet, even in a class of little boys and girls at school, when the unconscious teacher had stimulated the selfish desires, instead of rousing the pure love of knowledge, and formed seekers of victory, not seekers of truth and worth. Just so the tyrant of an empire or the tyrant of a plantation: each is a selfish lust throned in a person; and thus every selfish and lustful man, so far forth as he is selfish and lustful, is himself tyrant, making up for lack of empire in despotism nearer home,—is himself at once slave and master, crouching to the power which he cannot overcome, enthraling every will which he is able to command. And so throughout the whole range of the empire of evil; the polluting leprosy, the deathful disease, the demoniac frenzy, all are the selfish lusts active in the individual, reacting upon each other in society; when widely spread and powerful enough, organized in nations, consecrated by

churches, established as institutions, enforced by statutes, by parliaments, and by bayonets. Large or small, individual or social, secret or open, private or public, it is all one, offspring of the same infernal power, parent of the same disastrous effects, image and very substance of the spirit which is enmity both to God, to man, and to whatever is divine and humane in heaven and on earth.

No man, however secluded his position, however limited the sphere of his action, but for himself and for his friends, for his reverence of God and his desire of man's salvation and highest blessedness, enters into an atmosphere loaded with these elements of evil, conscious, if he knows his own weakness, of the peril to which he is exposed, to which he no less exposes others; no man, moreover, if he feels aught of the affinity, deeper than all natural relationships, uniting mankind as one child of the great Father, but must ask in earnestness, whether anything, if anything, what, in his heart and his conduct, will increase this mass of evil, or diminish it, — help the regeneration of man into the celestial sphere, or hinder this glorious hope. And in the presence which from a luminous word rose into a creative deed, he finds his prayer answered, his aspiration returning in an inspiration. Let us repeat the suggestion. He who

to the blind gave sight can surely open the eye which looks within, seeing God and heaven; who enabled the lame to walk, can pour strength into the soul going on its higher course into the kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit; who stretched out his hand to the leper shunned of all men, saying with effect, Be thou clean, can meet no defilement which he is unable to remove, no pollution of sin over which he may not pronounce the cleansing and healing word; who opened the ears of the deaf, can empower the secret sense to drink in the sweet melodies of higher worlds; who bade the dead arise, can out of the death in trespasses and sins raise men and mankind into the life of communion with the family in heaven and on earth. And if to the poor, amidst their wants and sorrows, he hath brought the message of promise and hope to which each age looks for courage in the struggle upward, it is not reasonless to trust that in him are infolded those treasures of wisdom and might, those energies of Divine love, through which the hope is to be fulfilled. To no fleshly arm do we look for strength; to nothing personal, to nothing weak as every person is weak, do we raise our eye and our heart; not to the very form of the Christ seen only as holy teacher and prophetic herald and highest martyr, living and dying, to the Truth;—ours

be trust in the arm of God which he revealed, on which he rested; in the omnipresence which he felt as his life, through which he lived the miracle of his being, and renews the miracle in the sons whom he leads to glory; in the Christ whose presence orbs the fulness of the creative light.

So when sorrow comes over us, despondency, weariness, and we think that the world and we are given over to hopeless sin, and ask in bitterness of soul, How long, O Lord, how long shall the hope deceive us? let us look, if first to the despised Nazareth, yet next to the Jordan overshadowed by the heavenly vision; if to the lonely wilderness and its days and nights of gloom, yet onward to the great light scattering darkness and leading on the dawn, to the mountain from which the mighty words still fall on the listening ear, to the hour of triumph in which even now, truly as in that far-off age and country, the spirit of the living God opens its own sphere to opened eyes, and breathes its own strength into strengthened men, and cleanses all pollution, and breathes out the melody which blesses the hearing ear, and makes souls alive, encircling all with its inmost gifts and its brightening paradise.

O Thou, whose power is the same in the realm of nature and the greater region of spirit,

open our inward sight to see the sources of all evil and the powers which overcome it. Enable us to look into the spiritual deep, and therein to perceive ourselves, our needs, our infirmities, our sins, and the saving Presence in which thou art with us. We have seen and mourned over the prevalence of wrong in private and in public, through society, among nations and parties and sects, establishing violence, enacting injustice, hallowing oppression, filling the earth with pollution and war, and leaving thy Church desolate. And now, Lord, we pray that thou wilt reveal in ourselves, in the covered depths, the origin and strength of these and of all evils. Show to us, Spirit of truth, what is the hidden demon whose tyranny hath enthralled us, and whose dark passions have clouded our souls. Enable us to see within us the blindness and the deafness, the leprosy, the death, the pollution, and the infernal shadows. In the wars of nations, in the tyrannies of government and the oppressions of slavery, in the drunkenness and impurity and all the vices of communities and of persons, we pray that thou wilt impart to us such true sight that we can interpret them, and learn their inner nature, and know where is the Redeemer. We confess unto thee, Father, that these wars are waged in our own hearts; that these tyrannies are the selfishness and pride

and envy and wrath within us; that the despot and the slave dwell side by side in the covetousness, the ambition, the servilities and enthralling fears, of which we have been conscious; and that all vices and vicious customs and institutions live first in the depth of the imbruted spirit, and are ever quickened and sustained from within.

Reveal anew thine image, O God! Open our eyes to see thy Christ still with us and in us. Grant that he may give once more sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf; that he may cleanse the leprous, and cast out the demons; and that unto the poor and oppressed his voice may bring promise and consolation. Thy spirit live in each soul, fountain of peace, flowing forth over all the earth, to make the desert a garden of the Lord; thy spirit be freedom in the hearts of thy children, and freedom and joy to the world; thy spirit pervade every heart with purity, that every life and the family of man may shine with the brightness of thy day. Remove from us all our sins; forgive all our trespasses; exalt us all into the realm of holiness and life and immortal peace. Thy kingdom come; thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Amen.



## CHAPTER VI.

### THE TRANSFIGURATION.

Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and, behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man save Jesus only. And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of Man be risen again from the dead. — *MATT.* xvii. 1-9.

THE lifetime of Jesus divides itself simply and naturally into three different periods. The first, spent in the common relations of the family, closes with his baptism; a period of which the historical notices are few and brief, leaving it chiefly for the religious imagination to supply. The second, a short season, described also briefly but in representations full of meaning, intervenes between the baptism and the commence-

ment of his public activity. The third opens with the annunciation of the approaching reign of God, and ends with the last prayer, in which his spirit passes into the hands of his Father. This third period is characterized by the constancy wherewith he fulfilled the service to which he was destined, for which he had been prepared through earlier disciplines, and to which he freely gave himself, all his endowments, all his powers, his entire being. This same great period seems to be divided again into two parts by the peculiar and magnificent scene of the Transfiguration. It comes, bespeaking in its outward splendor the real inward glory to which he has advanced, and may be considered, perhaps, as the reverse of the Temptation. In that, he conquered in lowliness the tempter from infernal realms; in this, he receives in height of worth the significant messages and homage from heaven. To pass over other contrasts, we may simply remark this correspondence: that, as the former closes with angelic services, so the latter closes with the voice which from heaven proclaims, not the greatest of older prophets, but only him, true Son of God.

Not alone as emblem of his attained elevation is this scene to be viewed. Before him in the future, now becoming near, approaches the last awful hour. The martyrdom of life is

soon to end in the martyrdom of the cross. How much of his destined suffering, and with what distinctness of sight, he foresaw, we are nowhere told; only he perceived, this is reported to us, and showed unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised,—that also he knew and spake, he should be raised again the third day. This assurance is solace, if the suffering be so full of sorrow. But in the near sight of the overwhelming baptism, even that trust might need support; and the support comes. The splendors from the mountain throw their celestial radiance forward over the dark valley, and reveal at once the benignant presence there, and the unspeakable glory beyond. The strength, moreover, which it ministered to Jesus, might descend also to the hearts of his disciples, sustaining them in their desolation, and remaining permanently with them as image of the Truth which they bore to the nations. Nor less may it come down from them to us, as symbol of the Everlasting Reality.

We have seen the spiritual birth into nature; we have seen the filial life opening into heaven; we have seen the celestial power victorious over the prince of darkness, and passing from that victory to bless the earth with words of truth,

with healing and quickening deeds: we see now the sunlike form shining in its own brightness, resting in its eternal sabbath. It is as if we had gone through one and another of the outer courts of the temple, and marked the wonders, and rendered our worship, and all at once the shrine itself is thrown open, that we find ourselves in the holiest place, and the everlasting light breaks in silence forth, out of the mystery spreading to gladden our hearts with the beauty and the repose. Here, we too think, it is good for us to be; here, where the peace may fold us in for ever, we would, if so we might, fix our abode. So does the Transfiguration, the vision of one fugitive day, stand to us as type of the unchangeable glory. The days of humiliation ending in death, through which Jesus lived, are to us like little, thin vapors floating off from the surface of a smooth mirror; the mirror itself, reflecting the calm image, gives us Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

Nor stop we here. The Christ in the Transfiguration, the image of God in the sunlike splendor, the second man, when Moses retires with his shadowy law, when Elias leads back the long train of prophets, remaining alone, immortal Son of the Highest, is the great promise to the world, the true type of a race redeemed from thralldom and darkness, elevated into free-

dom and glory. So long as man strives, he may perhaps fail and go astray; so long as his ignorance remains, he may wander and mourn in his uncertainties, his doubts, his deceiving hopes and appalling fears; so long as earthly and infernal lusts pollute and debase him, or rouse him into frenzy, he must, in every moment of true consciousness, feel himself leprous and diseased and demoniac; but in the Christ conquering without strife, in the Christ teaching as the sun shines, in the Christ pure and making pure, whole and making whole, touching everything with the finger of God, and dwelling evermore in him, we find ourselves before we are aware on the high mountain, not risen, not glorious, not boasting in ourselves, but raised and rejoicing in the attraction and the brightness of that sun which never sets nor grows dim. The Transfiguration, as it gives us the essential and unchangeable being of the Lord, so likewise promises that of which it is type, the essential and imperishable life of Man when once he comes to love and obey the Father.

The vision has not passed. That old mountain in Palestine is there still, rising from the same lower ground, resting beneath the same morning and evening and midday sky; but for ages since, as for ages before, it has looked down on nothing holier than the earth and the

sea and the common walks of men, it has looked up to nothing brighter than sky and stars and moon and sun. Centuries come and go, just as centuries came and went, but the Master and his disciples are not nearer to this than to other mountain, hill, or plain; the celestial communion, the vision of souls in bliss, is no nearer there, than in this low room out of which I look upon the hill rich in the hues of autumn; not there alone shines that face brighter than the sun, fall those robes over the earth whiter than the pure light; not only there, nor only to the few dazzled and entranced souls, sounds the voice, This is my beloved Son; hear ye him. Evermore that voice goes out over the whole earth; and whoever hath the ear heareth it, the voice of the Father, renewed and resounded in the word of the Son. Be the demons cast out, and our sins forgiven, and our souls alive with God's own spirit, in the pure heart the Presence is seen: love is the sun, and truth the boundless circle of its radiance, and God is all in all. Shadows and types and promises, and even stern and awful warnings, are gone indeed as shadows, types, promises, threatenings;—taken up into the sphere which renews and transfigures them, and makes them vital and full of beauty; as, when a bright morning comes, the thin clouds and the lines of low mist redden with the ray, then float off, never

lost, and, unseen themselves, dwell in the air, and in their diffusion help to color and perfect the day. Within this clear irradiation we feel the influence from heaven flowing into the calm heart; we are on the mountain, and, amidst the lessons and teachers of the ages, we rejoice in all their prophetic words and heroic deeds to see the same spirit, one and unchangeable, uniting the times and the eternities, bringing the distant together, dissolving doctrines in truth, reconciling contradictions, drawing all generations to one height, breathing holiness and peace, and gathering over the world the rest of its perpetual Sabbath. Let places and times, changes and transfigurations, pass, and come no more with their older shapes; the soul living in the Lord seeth evermore the face brighter than the sun, the garment whiter than the light. It goes before him in his daily course; it stays over him in his nightly rest; it soothes the sorrows of the heart stricken by grief for his own or others' ills, and promises for him and them a brighter morrow; it gladdens all his joys, —

“ Another morn

Risen on mid-noon.”

It is with him amidst his activities, empowering him, out of the depth of the calm vision and the filial love which it breathes, to serve and bless his brethren, working humbly as he can also

with the finger of God. Thus does he put on, as it were a celestial robe, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Father, who didst lead thy greatest Son to the mountain, and show forth his glory there, renew the vision to thy children as they seek to follow him, hearing his words, rejoicing in his works, striving to be his disciples. We thank thee that, as thou didst crown his youth with the opening of heaven and the descent of thy Spirit and the voice of thy love, and as in the wilderness thou didst bless his victory over sin with the ministries of angels, and lead him forth to proclaim thy message, to speak thy word, to form thy power into benignant and healing deed, so now thou hast opened this grand revelation of his filial spirit, and foreshown to mankind the presence which is indeed the heavenly life. We thank thee, that herein thou didst prepare thy Son for the suffering which he should so soon endure, for his decease which he should accomplish, and for the celestial glory wherewith thou clothest him at thy right hand.

Thou, who didst lead thus forth the lowly and godlike man, empower us even now to perceive his spirit near unto us, renewing his life in our souls. As we look inward, grant that we may know the Christ, thy Spirit resting on him, thy voice proclaiming him Son of God. As we look



inward, grant that we may follow the same Christ into his temptations, and rejoice in his victories and in the angels which serve him. As we look still inward, grant that we may still know him and go with him into the deeper spirit, wherein he advances to the conquest of evil and the establishment of thy kingdom. Lead us through these silent experiences to the holy mountain. Let thine image shine in us brighter than the sun. Let thy truth in us become whiter than the light. Let thy radiance surround us as a cloud. Speak thou to the asking soul, and teach us that thy kingdom is not in rite, not in word, not in pomp, but in righteousness and heavenly love. Open our sight, that we may see no man save Jesus only. And over all the scenes of trial which await us on the earth, send thou forward the promise and the peace of the Divine vision. So help us to bear the cross patiently and trustfully; to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts; to bury the body of sin, that we may live with the Lord, and that he may quicken even our mortal body by his spirit dwelling in us.

Over the whole earth, we beseech thee, Lord, to renew the transfiguration. Scatter the darkness; reveal thou the great light. Unveil thine image, defaced, neglected, covered up, among men, and grant that they may see him, standing

among them, whom they have not known; seeing him, excite them to welcome his presence, to hear and obey his voice, to receive his influence, and to follow him whithersoever he goeth, through life, through death, into the resurrection and the heavens. So be thou worshipped, O Father, for ever. Amen.

## CHAPTER VII.

### DEATH AND LIFE.

#### SECTION I.

##### THE POWER OF DARKNESS.

This is your hour, and the power of darkness.—LUKE xxii. 53.

IT seems strange. The three disciples naturally thought it good to dwell amidst the splendors of the mountain vision. Why not build there the three tabernacles, for Moses, for Elias, for Jesus? This surely befits the character, and all they could then perceive of the destiny, of the prophets and the Master. But the word is everlasting, My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are my ways your ways. Moses and Elias go back to their long silence; the cloud and the voice disappear; the dazzling splendor has passed away. Jesus, left alone, leads his disciples down the mountain, and thenceforward his whole thought appears marked by those anticipations which connect themselves with the near and sorrowful decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.

Everything has its two sides. In the Divine Mind the destiny awaiting Jesus shone like the dawn; to the human eye it was the hour of prevailing night, the power of darkness. Enemies have gained numbers and strength; their money, their force, their persevering wickedness, have succeeded. Overwhelmed with the conflicts of a heart shrinking in agony from the terrible doom, still striving to cast its burden on the Father and to trust in him through all; assured how soon even his disciples should forsake him, and leave him, but that the Father lives, alone; assured also, that, of those very friends with whom he had dwelt so long and in such dearness of intimacy, one should deliver him up to his enraged enemies,—he waits in the garden, full of sorrow and of prayer, for the hour yet darker which is at hand. We know the issue. The heart of man remembers it with other tears than he wept, and blesses God, not that he suffered, but that he conquered; not that the power of darkness prevailed, but that the power of darkness passed with the morrow, dissolved in the brighter dawn after which there is no night.

And this is also perpetual symbol. We have a common saying, The darkest time is just before break of day. There is nothing arbitrary in this spiritual fact. It must be so. No cross, no

crown, men have repeated for ever. And all experience attests it, and shows, when it is over, that, things being as they are, not temptation only must succeed the coming of the filial spirit, not sorrow only when this spirit meets and resists the evils of earth and assaults from beneath, but even death, clouding the light of the transfiguration. The Apostle comes proclaiming the Truth; we hear his word gladly, and follow him awhile, as he speaks the oracle and rejoices to see men welcome it to their hearts; but sin and falsehood die not soon. Sin and falsehood have the world, the numbers, and the power. And the world has in all times some form or other of the cross; and not only the Apostle, but the humblest disciple, must bear it after his Saviour. Some may talk unwisely of persecution for righteousness' sake, and proudly invite sympathy with themselves in their sacrifices; others may sneer at the delusion, or, in wiser and gentler spirit, urge the true humility which forgets the self and accepts its lot without either reproach or complaint. But say what we will, so soon as the thing is looked at thoroughly, men will find themselves compelled to see and to confess that the cross is no temporary fact, but the burden which every true soul is destined to bear before it is made perfect; that the martyrdom, which is really within always, even in ages of

deepest darkness, is not an occasional heroism, but a suffering for the Truth, borne some time or other by every man who lives the life of Jesus. We cannot escape it. This way, walk we but firmly in it, leads inevitably to the hour in which evil celebrates its triumph, and the power of darkness spreads the shades in which only the cross is seen.

This spiritual law of crucifixion may reveal itself in various ways. The whole process of the divine life, the whole development of the Christ in us, may be secret, confined to the consciousness within which it advances. The birth, the baptismal vision, the wilderness, temptations of the Devil and ministries of angels, the virtues of the healing truth, the vision and rapture of the mountain, the last evening, the morning shaded by the prolonged darkness, may be hidden from the world, may have little openly to do with outward things; but they are realities of experience, realities of an experience which must have such issue. The Pharisees and Scribes, the false priests and the traitors, the world and the Devil, conspire within, and crucify the Christ. That one fact is form of the universal law. Then if out of the retirement of a private experience the man is called to bear the witness of word or the witness of deed to the immortal Christ, the same issue repeats itself. Let him

worship only the Father; let him serve men in the spirit of Jesus; let him identify himself with the poor, the despised, the enslaved; let him be true to God when the sects are false, and obedient to God when parties and his country refuse obedience, and a Christian when either Christianity is despised, or, what is worse, distorted into the monstrous image of an almighty despotism; then he will learn also something of what his Master bore before him, and, living as he lived, amidst influences kindred to those which gathered over him, he must go into his sad retirements, and bow beneath heavy griefs, and drink a bitter cup, and stand once more at the cross: the Christ must again be crucified.

A sad destiny, we think. A dark promise to the soul asking its rest and peace in God alone. Precisely this: the end is rest and peace in God alone; so we must be severed from everything but God. The earthly must die, death is in its nature; the sensual must die, the selfish, the evil: the Christ is crucified, but it is not the Christ that dies; the Christ is immortal.

## SECTION II.

## HE IS RISEN.

He is risen. — MATT. xxviii. 5.

IT is not the Christ that dies; the Christ is immortal. Even the great Athenian lover of wisdom, just as he was about to drink the poison, and lay him down upon his bed in the prison, that last, sad evening, told his friends that HE should not die. The real man, the living soul, out of the stiffened body and the hard prison walls, soars into the sphere whence he came, where is his eternal home. And the Christian Apostle declares Jesus to have abolished death, that shadowy form, that unreal thing, a powerless spectre, and to have brought life and immortality, the real substance, the living power, to light. The Christ is indeed, in very essence, no less than the resurrection and the life. What in the historical person was earthly, perishable, kindred to the imperfections of mortality, died; herein the triumph achieved by the power of darkness. The Christ, the celestial, the imperishable, the Son of God, liveth, risen, clothed with all power in heaven and on earth, thenceforth the present and quickening spirit wherein all are made alive.

We have been through a course of mingled



shade and light; and that after all the cross should stand at the end of it, might seem to throw complete shade over the whole. But the cross does not stand at the end of the path, nor the sepulchre. There is no cross, there is no sepulchre; death is turned into life, the buried seed grows into celestial fruit; over the last evening in Gethsemane and the noonday eclipse which came after it, light has broken from above, and immortality, — this alone lifts up our sunken hearts and brightens our dimmed eyes, and makes the whole earth a radiance. May we bear the cross, that the Christ may be revealed in us! We have now one everlasting hymn: He is risen.

And so for ever does the Divine Shepherd lead us. He hath brought us into the beautiful pastures, beside the sweet streams, of this maternal Nature, and made us glad, even through pain. He hath united us with our human kind, to bless and to be blessed in affections which sorrow hallows and joy unfolds. And over both nature and man he hath spread the mysterious circle of spirit, inviting us to dwell evermore within its sphere and its influence; revealing from it the life of his own Christ to penetrate through all our affections and all our powers, to make our lives holy and godlike by the virtue coming out from the present inspiration, and at

the last to convert the cross into the crown, and the sepulchre into the avenue which opens to heaven. It is for us only to accept the gift, to obey the heavenly vision, to walk with Him whose hand leadeth us alike through the light and the darkness. And through whatever depth we may go down, into whatever valley covered with shadows of death we may enter, until we reach the last, let us trust with confidence in the comfort which he will surely give. He will not fail us, be sure, in the end; but when men pronounce us dead, his angels shall say that we are risen.

THE END.

















